

WALSALL

# the chronicle

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## Taxpayers' £2.2m bill for legal battles

Taxpayers have shelled out more than £2.2 million for Walsall Council to take legal advice over the past three years. The authority has already spent more than £1m this financial year on costly legal fees.

Council bosses said the ever-growing compensation culture was part of the problem. Motorists whose cars have been damaged by potholes or pedestrians who have tripped on pavements are typical claims lodged with the authority. Employment tribunals also drive up legal costs.

Councils across the West Midlands have seen soaring legal costs as they become caught up in expensive battles both in and out of court.

The Black Country councils, excluding Walsall, and councils in Staffordshire and Wyre Forest, face a combined legal bill so far of £2m since April last year.

Walsall Council bosses said they "robustly" defend claims when they are advised there is a sound legal reason for doing so.

In 2008/09, Walsall Council spent £265,777 on legal costs, rising to £881,743 in 2009/10. So far for this financial year, the figure stands at £1,053,677.

Finance chief Councillor Chris Towe, said: "A significant proportion of the external legal fees incurred are paid in relation to defending claims brought against the council."

"Where the council is advised there are sound legal reasons for defending any claims, it will do so robustly. Residents will be aware of the growth of the compensation culture in this country therefore we don't encourage this."

"This ensures that public money is not diverted from the front line services."

He said action had been taken to ensure that such money is kept within the council's budget to deliver vital services. He added: "Residents should understand it is not efficient to retain in-house specialists on every specific area of law that may arise and thus there is a need to engage external solicitors at market rates." The council has worked alongside other authorities to make sure it gets best value for legal work.

## Fishy tale of one that got away

A copper fish forming part of a £40,000 public project in Brownhills has mysteriously disappeared for the second time from its pride of place on the end of a fishing line.

The fish previously went missing from the sculpture over the Wyrley and Essington Canal in Walsall Wood last year. It was discovered it had fallen off on to the towpath, and picked up by community-spirited 71-year-old Barbara Grant, who lives in nearby Beechtree Road.

But this time there is no hint as to where it could have gone as the fisherman itself is still intact, so it seems unlikely to be an act of vandalism. The steel and brass figures of 25 Walsall Wood people were put up on the green opposite Brooklands Road, along with the fisherman by the canal, in February last year. They are part of the same project which saw a 55ft replica of a pithead, believed to be the biggest mining tribute in the world, installed on the land off Lichfield Road, Walsall Wood.

The art project was funded by Walsall Council and carried out by Cradley Heath-born artist Luke Perry's firm, Industrial Heritage Stronghold.

**Education firm is now facing tough questions**

## SERCO WILL SHED 100 IN SHAKE-UP

The private company with a multi-million pound contract to run Walsall's education is to lose 100 jobs.

Walsall Children's Services, part of Serco Group, has undergone a government inspection that revealed it is only meeting its minimum requirements.

The organisation, which employs around 400 in Walsall in non-teaching jobs, is now facing tough questions into its ability to turn around educational standards in the borough.

Posts are to be axed due to the renegotiation of the contract between Serco and Walsall Council, which is looking to reduce the cost by £7.5m over three years.

An Ofsted report which looked into the service, based at the Education Development Centre, in Pelsall Road, Rushall, branded it "adequate", saying standards needed to be raised in the borough's schools.

### Awarded

It comes just days after Walsall came 151st out of 171 local authorities for GCSEs and A-levels. The organisation was awarded a £345m deal to run education services in the borough for 12 years in July 2008.

But Walsall Council leader Councillor Mike Bird, said he was not satisfied with its performance.

If they cannot improve themselves, how can they improve education in Walsall? said Councillor Bird.

The standard of education is still far, far short of what we want it to be. The issue needs to be taken into account more strongly.

Graham Talbot, interim managing director, said a reduction in workforce was "likely" but could not confirm numbers. "Discussions will be held with the council and staff," he said.

Metal thieves have once again plundered drain covers from streets in Walsall - leaving taxpayers with a bill of £5,000.

Eight covers were stolen from Moorside Gardens in Reedwood. Two were also taken from nearby Lane-side Gardens. Residents have condemned the crimes.

They said people could have fallen down the open drains and been hurt.

Moorside Gardens resident Norman Smith said: "I think it is terrible, absolutely disgraceful.

They were taken in the night and people could have fallen down the holes."

The 59-year-old added the drain covers that were secured with hinges had been left by the thieves as they prevented them from making a quick getaway.

Temporary safety lids and cones are now covering the holes in the two streets.

It costs taxpayers £500 to replace each manhole cover. Walsall Council said it was working on permanent replacement covers.

## Asda be artistic to win



Duty Manager Jason McLanachun, back, centre right with staff from Asda, George Street, Walsall.

Asda is in Walsall is looking for a young artist from to create a centre piece for the town's regeneration project.

The supermarket in George Street, has donated £500 to Walsall Council's regeneration fund and secured a section of the hoarding surrounding the Shannons Mill site.

Applications must be submitted by Monday, February 7, to Asda Walsall Design Competition, c/o Ashley McKeown, Euro RSCG PR, 52 Princess Street, Manchester, M1 6JX.

## £2m library will be built say chiefs

A £2 million library will still be built in Walsall, council chiefs have vowed, despite the announcement that six others will close in the borough.

Plans for a new library and children's centre in Bentley have been in the pipeline for more than four years but the recession and the downturn in the property market are being blamed for the delay.

Money to fund the project is due to come from sale of land in Bentley and this cash has been ring-fenced.

The state of the current property market means it is not the right time to sell. Regeneration chief Councillor Adrian Andrew, said: "We remain committed to providing a new facility in Bentley."

"Funding for the building was going to be ring-fenced from the sale of the land but obviously, with the downturn of the economy, the property market has taken a hammering."

He added: "But I still want a new venue for Bentley and discussions with officers to make this happen are still continuing."

People living in Bentley have been consulted over the new library, set for Queen Elizabeth Avenue, and have even selected a design.

Bentley's former library, along with a children's centre, was closed in 2006 and has since been demolished. Councillor Bill Madeley, chairman of Bentley Project Reference Group, said he had been given assurances money from the sale of land in Bentley would be safeguarded.

He said: "The main message is we want a new library in Bentley and we don't want a cheaper one either."

"We want the one that the people agreed with."

On Tuesday, it was revealed six of the borough's 16 libraries are due to close under cost cutting measures.

Leisure chiefs have ordered a review of all the currently libraries and will reveal the locations of those facing the axe after that.

It has been hinted that libraries could move into community centres, leisure centres and even churches.

**Better – page 4**

## Delight over green success

Campaigners have spoken of their delight after they were successful in securing Walsall's first village green.

The Friends of Chuckery Corner Green applied to Walsall Council for a parcel of land between Walhouse Road and Charlotte Street to be recognised as a village green in order to apply for grants for a revamp.

The group had to prove the land had been used for recreation for at least 20 years, and it was reported last week that councillors had granted the application. The campaigners are now putting together another application for lottery funding.

Group Secretary Alan McDevitt, said: "Obviously we are delighted at the decision and we would like to thank the council officers in the planning department and legal services who gave us a great deal of help during the application process."

"Particular thanks should go to the council green spaces team, who gave us invaluable advice and support."

"As far as we know, this is the first time Walsall MBC have given approval for a village green."

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## Doomed market's deadline

No commercial operators are interested in taking over and reviving doomed Darlaston Market. The borough's regeneration chief said he had been in talks with private operators but they had come to nothing.

Walsall Council's cabinet approved closure of the King Street market by March 31 in a bid to save £24,000 a year.

Councillor Adrian Andrews, regeneration boss, said he was disappointed, but the economic climate was forcing such measures.

"We have had talks with commercial operators, but at this time they are not interested."

"For the past few years, Darlaston Market has been behind the shops and not in the high street. Time was the death knell for the market and I will be investigating that."

"Darlaston is struggling and we need to regenerate it. We don't want it fall off the edge of the planet, particularly being stuck between Bilston and Wednesbury."

Two Darlaston traders selling toiletries and clothes will relocate to Walsall or Willenhall, and two mobile units – a butcher and a burger van – may continue with street licences in agreement with landowners Asda.

A council report says market income fell 12 per cent on last year and is only expected to bring in £7,000 by the end of the year.

Council leader Mike Bird said: "It's sad, but I hope people will be able to accommodate it and we can see a market come back to Darlaston in the future."

## Car permits double to £40

Residents' parking permits in Walsall will double in price after council chiefs agreed to the increase.

The price will rise from £20 to £40 after being approved by the council's cabinet.

There will also be a cost of £50 for any additional permits taken out by a household from April 1.

There are five parking zones in the borough which aim to make it easier for residents to park outside their homes.

The permits are not compulsory, but make parking more convenient in areas close to Walsall town centre, Banks's Stadium and Manor Hospital.

It was revealed that £70,000 is spent on operating residents' parking schemes but they generate only £7,000.

Council leader Mike Bird said: "Yes, it's £40 a year, but the convenience factor has to be paid for."

## Helpers needed

Volunteers are needed to help with collections to raise money for the Alzheimer's Society at supermarkets across Walsall. First collections are at Morrisons, in Anchor Road, Aldridge, on February 4 and 5. Cash raised is used to support and care for people with dementia and their families.

For information, email emma.dowler@alzheimers.org.uk or call 01384 295601.

## Routes to success

Walsall delivery group Nightfreight has won new work with the country's biggest storage equipment supplier.

The three-and-a-half-year deal with Rapid Racking is said to be worth seven figures to Nightfreight, based at Crestwood House, Birches Rise, Willenhall.

It will see the storage solutions supplier entrust all its onward deliv-

eries to Nightfreight. It previously ran its own fleet of vehicles.

Nightfreight will manage the complete outbound delivery of Rapid Racking's full product range, including pallet racking, shelving and containers from its Gloucestershire site to customers nationwide.

The company will operate five vehicles from Kisley, Southall, Willenhall and Pucklechurch.

## Sum effort by staff

Employees at a Black Country wholesaler have given a tired Darlaston classroom a maths-themed makeover to help improve pupils' enthusiasm for numbers.

Staff from Blakemore wholesale cash and carry depots in Walsall, Wolverhampton and Birmingham joined forces to redecorate the classroom at Salisbury Primary School in Salisbury Street, Darlaston. The

team worked for two days to paint the room and give it a maths theme.

Team leader Terry Webster said: "It's the first time all three Midlands-based cash and carries have worked together to complete a community project and it has been a real success."

"It has helped us to work a lot closely together and we will definitely be looking to collaborate on projects like these in the future."

## Car dash peril for children

A driver from Walsall who was pursued by police at high speed through streets where children were playing has been spared an immediate prison sentence.

Mohammed Irfan, of Moncrieffe Street, Chicker, reached 50mph in 30mph zones.

Hugh O'Brien-Quinn, prosecuting, told Wolverhampton Crown Court last week that Irfan had been spotted by patrolling police officers using a hand-held phone behind the wheel of a VW Golf.

When the officers operated their flashing blue lights and siren, Irfan accelerated away at speed along streets where children were playing and mothers were out with pushchairs.

One vehicle had to brake sharply to avoid being hit by Irfan's car, said Mr O'Brien-Quinn.

Irfan admitted dangerous driving and was given a 12-week jail term suspended for 18 months and told to carry out 180 hours community service.

Charnjit Jutla, defending, said Irfan "simply became terrified" when he saw the blue lights and was now deeply remorseful.

Judge Martin Walsh said there was the possibility a child could have run into the street. It was only by good fortune the 29-year-old had not injured members of the public.

The judge further disqualified Irfan from driving for two years and ordered him to pay £185 costs.

# Bad weather delays opening of hospice

Severe weather has delayed the completion of the £5.5 million Walsall Hospice. The first patients had been due to move into the new building this month but will now move in mid-March.

The cold snap and heavy snowfall in December delayed work on the long-awaited hospice, being built at the site of the former Goscock Hospital, in Goscock Lane, Walsall.

Patients from Little Buxton Day Hospice are still due to be the first to make the move.

Peter Mitchell, of NHS Walsall, said: "The project was affected by the severe weather which affected construction schemes across the country."

Patients from Little Buxton will be moving in mid-March now.

We had always planned a phased move into the new building. The hospice is expected to be fully up and running by April."

Much of the scaffolding around the new build has now been taken down.

### Nursing

Workers moved in to start laying the foundations at the end of last year.

The hospice will have 12 inpatient beds and a day hospice for 20 outpatients.

It will offer complementary therapy and services for bereavement and counselling, and there will be a dedicated dementia unit.

Nursing duties are to be carried out by staff from Lichfield's St Giles Hospice.

A campaign for a hospice in Walsall began more than two decades ago and a £1.5 million appeal has been launched to help pay for running costs and equipment in the first year.

Cheryl Bradbury, Walsall Hospice head of fundraising, said work to hit that target was going well.

At the last count, around £900,000 had been raised.

For the past two years, one of the hospice's main money-raising events has been the Starlight Walk, a five-mile night stroll around Walsall Arboretum.

To donate to the hospice appeal, visit the [www.walsallhospice.co.uk](http://www.walsallhospice.co.uk) website.

## Pupils are top of the Kreme



Pool Hayes teacher Patrick Ryan with pupils Connor Evans, aged 13, Amy Hussey, Asha Rauda, Georgia Southall, all 14, Ben Rix and Jacob Dunkley, both 13.

Thrifty pupils at a Willenhall school cooked up a sweet deal to raise £300 for sponsoring the education of two children abroad.

The class of 13 and 14-year-olds at Pool Hayes Arts and Community School set up a doughnut shop to raise money for communities in El Salvador and China.

Krispy Kreme Thursday has been taking place at the Castle Drive school, with the proceeds used to pay medical and education costs of Yichun Jiang, of Liu Shu, China, and Yen-

Elizabeth Tejada Ayala, of El Salvador, in Central America.

Class 9RP buys the doughnuts from Birmingham-based Krispy Kreme at a reduced price, before selling them off at full price. The latest event raised £292.14.

Teacher Patrick Ryan said his 23 pupils loved to participate and co-ordinated the sale themselves every year. Mr Ryan said they also exchange letters and information about their lives with Yichun and Yen-Elizabeth, who are both aged 13.

## Big thank you for festive aid

A hospice charity in Walsall has thanked people from across the Black Country for their response to a festive campaign appealing for volunteers and donations.

Acorns Children's Hospice, which provides care for 600 children with life threatening illnesses and 800 families from its three hospices, launched its Be A Star appeal in November.

Local stars have included the Rotary Club of Walsall who raised £3,000 by putting up a Tree of Light at the Saddlers Centre.

Staff at the West Brom building society delivered toys to the hospice in Walstead Road, Walsall, and ambulance drivers at Sandwell Hospital sponsored Christmas messages in aid of Acorns instead of traditional cards.

To help the hospice, call 01642 825091.

## Plea for ponies to help collect cash

A children's charity has applied to carry out street collections with miniature Shetland ponies.

The Phoenix Children's Foundation provides disabled and severely ill children with equipment and therapeutic activities. It has applied to Walsall Council for two street collection licences in Aldridge and Walsall for March and August.

The petting ponies visit disabled and sick children in hospices.

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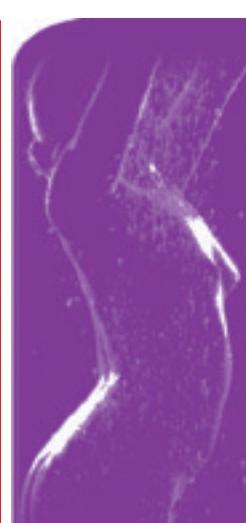


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# Poorer teens forced to leave school warns MP

The Government's decision to end the education maintenance allowance may force hundreds of children in Walsall to leave school at 16, a Labour MP warned ministers.

The grant of up to £30 per week is handed to the poorest teenagers to encourage them to stay on in education beyond the compulsory school leaving age. Its abolition has sparked protests by students across the country. Spearheading a Commons debate on the impact of its abolition, Walsall North MP David Winnick criticised the move.

He said it would not only force students in his constituency to give up their studies after 16 but also limit skills and enterprise, damaging the area's ambitions for job creation through regeneration, and sustainable economic growth and prosperity.

He said the average annual income in the borough was £21,000 – at the threshold for household earnings at which 16 to 19-year-olds can receive the full benefit.

Families whose income is between £20,818 and £25,521 receive £20 a week and

those on between £25,522 and £30,810, £10 a week.

"The pupils involved would, understandably, be under some financial pressure," said Mr Winnick. "In some instances, they could well be under pressure to leave school at the first opportunity."

"Although £30 a week may not seem much, it is certainly a help. It helps pay for fares, food and other costs, and it comes in very handy."

More than 4,000 teenagers in Walsall get

the allowance to ease family costs of staying on at sixth form or colleges.

Around 63 per cent of pupils at Willenhall School Sports College receive the grant, 57 per cent at Pool Hayes Arts and Community School, 75 per cent at Frank G Harrison Engineering College, 51 per cent at Walsall Academy and 58 per cent at Walsall College.

The allowance is to be replaced with an enhanced discretionary learner support fund, with a budget of £78m, whilst the existing EMA budget is £560m.

## Freed inmate in fight

An abusive drunk was arrested for fighting in Walsall town centre just hours after being released from prison.

Alan Kenneth Walker, of Caldmore Road, was returned to jail for 12 weeks by the town's magistrates.

He admitted affray and breaching a criminal anti-social behaviour order in Leicester Street on Monday, January 10.

John Walker, defending, said the 59-year-old had been released from prison at Winslow Green, Birmingham, earlier that day and had drunk two glasses of wine at a pub before making his way home to Walsall.

"At about 3.50pm two people were having a scrap. Alan Walker stumbled across them and for some unknown reason put down his carrier bags and joined in," he said.

"All he can remember is waking up in Walsall Manor Hospital," Mr Walker added.

Walker was seen on CCTV throwing punches at passers-by.

He was jailed last month for eight weeks for breach of a Crasbo issued in 2009 for persistent bad behaviour. Walker, a former Queen Mary Grammar pupil, had assaulted a teenage girl who tried to calm him down.

## Wizard wheeze

People can find out more about a health technique at a drop-in session in Walsall this weekend.

The Bowen Technique claims to help people suffering from conditions including asthma, tennis elbow or digestive problems.

Walsall Mind and Body Centre, in Hawes Close, off Broadway, is hosting the event on Saturday, January 22, with a talk and demonstration of the technique from 10.30am to 12.30pm.

# Anglers disgusted as dead fish pollute pool

Willenhall Memorial Park was a "scene from a horror film" as thousands of dead fish floated in the pool, anglers claim. The entire stock of around 5,000 has been wiped out at the park because of this winter's freezing weather.

The dead fish have been rotting in the water and causing a terrible smell, according to pool bailiff Tony Bray, a member of Parkside Fishing Club. Mr Bray, aged 57, said he was devastated more was not done to save the creatures.

"It is absolutely disgusting at the pool and the smell is turning people's stomachs.

"I think Walsall Council should have done more to save the fish and now clean up the site. I offered to camp out at the park overnight so they could have pumps running 24 hours a day to save the fish.

"It's just a terrible tale. I take disabled people fishing at the pool every summer – what will we do this year? There are no fish left there."

Mr Bray added: "Dead fish are lying around everywhere, stinking. It's like a scene from a horror film."

Walsall Council said it had done all it could to save the pool's fish, at a cost of more than £1,000, but the outcome had been disappointing.

Council parks manager Nigel Isley said the authority had now ordered an aerator to oxygenate the pool at Willenhall Memorial Park during the summer months and may add calcium carbonate to the water to break down the poisonous sediments at the bottom of the pool.

### Attracting

The fish, including carp and roach, have died after last month's sub-zero conditions froze the water.

Temperatures as low as -12C (10F) caused a thick layer of ice to form on the already shallow waters.

Walsall Council said it had hired a digger on at least three occasions to try to break the ice.

Mr Isley added: "The saga has been disappointing to all, but sadly, it's simply nature running its course.

"Park visitors and residents can be reassured that we're doing as much as we can."

Thieves have stolen fish, using pitchforks and shovels to load them into vehicles.

Vandals are also pulling apart wooden fences at the park so that they can prod and poke the dead fish in the water.



Horror Parkside Fishing Club member Tony Bray at Willenhall Memorial Park.

## Lout patrols cut hedges

Hedges are being removed at Walsall park in a bid to stamp down on anti-social behaviour and litter. Work is under way on the £200,000 revamp of Kings Hill park.

Councillor Anthony Harris, cabinet member for leisure, said: "Some of the hedges are being removed to help reduce litter and reduce anti-social behaviour which is a real concern to

local residents. This will benefit the whole community."

Walsall Council's Greenspaces team and Friends of Darlaston South Parks are working together on the five-year scheme to carry out immediate improvements and prioritise further work as and when funding becomes available," added Councillor Harris.

# England kit tricksters admit fraud

A fraudster from Aldridge forged the signatures of England football stars on sports shirts and sold them on ebay.

Debt-ridden Ben Coates copied the names of players on Umbro shirts bought for £5 and sold them with bogus certificates of authenticity for up to £40. Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

Up to 750 fans were duped by the con that ran for 18 months from the home Coates shared with Lucy Davenport, in Swindon, South Staffordshire.

The scam, which ran for 18 months from February 2008, netted up to £14,000, prosecutor Hugh O'Brien Quinn told the court last week.

The con was uncovered after Umbro, the official England football team kit supplier, was tipped off and bought a shirt with forged signatures for £40.

Specimen signatures of star players were found, along with shirts supposedly signed by England players and the British Lions rugby squad, when officials raided the couple's home.

Coates told police he was driven to launch the football shirt internet scam in a bid to pay off debts after losing his job. The 29-year-old bought shirts for £5, copied signatures on to them and then sold them with bogus certificates of authenticity.

### Uncovered

When the scam was uncovered, Coates told police: "I only did it because I was out of work. It was my idea. I would buy them for £5, write on the signatures and sell them on ebay. They sold very well."

David Bratt, defending, said: "None of the money was used to live the high life. The couple had debts of up to £12,000."

The pair, who split up soon afterwards, were arrested in September 2009 but not charged until a year later. Coates, now working as a delivery driver and married to another woman, and Davenport, aged 25, now of Rangeways Road, Kingswinford, admitted fraud.

Coates was sentenced to a year in jail, suspended for two years, with 240 hours unpaid work. Davenport was given a 36 week jail sentence, suspended for two years, with 180 hours unpaid work. They must each pay a £2,515 fine and £800 towards costs.

## Wait goes on for new-style signs

Hi-tech information signs to ease traffic problems in Walsall have yet to be switched on, nine months after the £100,000 project was due to go live.

There is still no date in sight for six signs on busy routes across the borough to become operational.

They have been put in place to provide up-to-date congestion-busting information such as road closures and accidents.

The signs were expected to be in use last Easter but Walsall Council said they were awaiting the go-ahead to get them connected to a BT line.

The digital information signs are to be used in Wolverhampton Road, Bescot Road, Lichfield Road and Somerfield Road, Bloxwich, Birmingham Road and Darlaston Road.

Walsall Council's transport chief, Councillor Tom Ansell, said: "The delay is because we are waiting for the utility service to wire them up. We are on the hands."

## Mayor the guest of honour as care home opens doors

The Mayor of Walsall has been invited to open a new care home in the borough this week.

Councillor Gary Clarke is due to cut the ribbon at Cedar Falls Care Home, in Bescot Road, on Friday, January 21.

On the Thursday, he was due to visit a new Walsall Council depot in Pelsall Road.

Councillor Clarke is also attending the Welfare to Work organisation at Portemps People Development Group, in Bradford Place, Walsall, to hand out certificates.

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# Action to clear up surgery

Action is being taken to clear up a neglected former doctor's surgery in Willenhall which has become a magnet for yobs and vandals. It follows months of complaints from neighbours and councillors about the state of Ednam House.

The surgery was owned by Dr Amoolya Prasad, who was suspended from practising in Walsall in 2004.

The building in Bloxwich Road South has been repeatedly targeted by arsonists, while drug paraphernalia and dumped rubbish has also been found there.

Council chiefs have tracked down the owner and are now ordering the site to be cleared up.

Regeneration chief Councillor Adrian Andrew, said: "The council is concerned at the state of these properties following complaints from members of the public."

"Councillors have approved formal action to issue a notice under Section 215 of the Planning Act requiring that the owners undertake urgent works to improve the appearance of the property. The notice will be served in the near future."

Willenhall South councillor Carl Creaney welcomed the action but said it was "a long time coming".

"It's about time the owners of the building started taking responsibility for the property," he said.

"There have been nothing but problems there with fly-tipping and the general state of the building being an eyesore."

"I think at one point there were five fire attacks in a week, and that was time the fire brigade and police could have been out saving lives."

Former owner Dr Prasad was suspended after patients complained about the level of care they received.

## Weight loss programme

Walsall residents can get trim by signing up to a new weight loss programme.

Evolve is running at Oak Park Leisure Centre and Bloxwich Leisure Centre.

It aims to help people make small manageable changes to their lifestyle, activity and diet.

The 12-week programme costs £40, which must be paid in advance, or £3.50 per session.

Men with a body mass index over 30 can attend for free thanks to funding from NHS Walsall.

Individual consultations will be held with everyone interested in joining the programme to assess whether it is suitable for their individual needs.

To make an appointment, call sport and leisure development services on 01922 605500.

## Sporting dinner

Midlands boxer Richie Woodhall will be holding a sporting dinner at Walsall Football Club this spring.

He will be appearing alongside comedian Austin Knight in Bescot Crescent on May 5. Tickets are priced at £30 including a four-course meal and are available by calling 01922 651414.

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## Music workshops

A children's workshop will be showing youngsters how to bring music into their lives in Walsall.

The session, to be held at Walsall Museum on February 24, will be hosted by Ruth Radcliffe and will inspire children to create their own musical instruments using recycled materials.

The workshops will be held at 10am and 1pm at the Lichfield Street

museum, and are suitable for children aged between six and 12. They coincide with the Classic Beats drums exhibition at the museum. The drums collection belongs to Sir Alan Buckley.

Admission is 75p per child. To book, call 01922 653116.

On March 1 there will be a performance from "Sir" Alan Buckley and Friends at the museum.

## Inquest on woman

A retired secretary died after falling down the stairs at her Walsall home on Christmas Day.

Kathleen Elizabeth Beddoes, aged 81, died at Walsall Manor Hospital hour later, an inquest heard.

Care worker Lisa Lewis, of Complete Care, told the hearing she found the widow when she visited her in Willenhall Street, Darlaston, at 10.20am.

"I found her lying at the foot of the stairs. She was unconscious, but was breathing. Her right eye was swollen," Miss Lewis said.

Black Country Coroner Mr Robin Balmain told the inquest a post mortem gave the cause of death as bleeding of the brain, hypothermia and cardiac arrest. He recorded a verdict that Mrs Beddoes died as a result of an accident.

# Cut library services 'will be even better'

Walsall's leisure boss has insisted he would be able to offer an "improved service" despite the decision to close six libraries across the borough.

It was revealed last week that six branches and 21 jobs will go as Walsall Council battles to save £65 million. [walsalchchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk](mailto:walsalchchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk)

## Police not to blame for death

A police complaints inquiry was launched after an epileptic man who was twice restrained by officers for attacking hospital staff died, an inquest was told.

John Law died at Walsall Manor Hospital on July 9.

The inquest heard he struck hospital workers including a nurse with a walking frame and police officers were called to help subdue him on July 1 and 2.

He died of broncho-pneumonia and alcohol-related heart and liver disease.

An Independent Police Complaints Commission inquiry has since cleared officers of any blame after the matter was referred by West Midlands Police.

Unmarried Mr Law, aged 52, of Thomas House, Stoney Lane, Little Bloxwich, was taken to hospital after being arrested on July 1 after allegedly setting fire to a carpet at the block of flats where he lived.

Consultant pathologist Nicholas Hunt said Mr Law had been "acting strangely and hallucinating". He added: "When he arrived at hospital, handcuffs became necessary."

Police were called as it was said Mr Law was attacking people, Mr Hunt said.

Following two further incidents the next day when officers were called, he suffered cardiac arrest.

Mr Hunt said Mr Law had serious health problems including epilepsy, heart scarring and brain shrinkage consistent with a history of heavy drinking.

Black Country coroner Robin Balmain recorded a verdict that Mr Law died as a result of natural causes.

## Knife used in robbery

A man was robbed at knifepoint in Bentley, Walsall. A Ford Focus drove up to the victim, aged 56, in Canterbury Avenue at about 3.40am on January 11. Two men got out and threatened him before stealing £30, a mobile phone, watch and gold ring. Both men were around 20, black, 6ft, and of medium build. Witnesses can call 0345 113 5000.

This is part of the authority's battle to save £65m over the next three years.

Since April 2009, all Walsall libraries have been closed on Mondays in a bid to save costs.

But Councillor Anthony Harris, said he thought the service could emerge stronger.

A review of all 16 borough libraries is now taking place and residents will be asked for opinions.

"We are not able to identify the locations which may be affected until the review is finished but we're optimistic we will offer an improved service," Councillor Harris said.

"We live in uncertain times and some difficult decisions are being taken up and down the country."

"We're no different here in Walsall and we must take a hard look at our library service."

"We need a library service that is fit for the 21st century and not to carry on with one that we have inherited."

### Changing

He added: "Libraries are changing places and, although they are still about books and information, they now need to be about online services, ICT skills, digital learning and new services and technologies that were simply not around to such an extent 10 or 20 years ago."

Walsall Council operates 16 libraries with only three – Blakenall, Brownhills and Walsall Wood – built in the last 20 years. There are also plans to change the names of all libraries in Walsall to Library, Learning and Information Centres.

Councillor Harris added: "This is not about buildings. It's about the service."

"We want an improved service and I'm giving a pledge that this review will see an improved library service that is ready to meet the needs of the 21st century."

It is believed remodelling the library service will save more than £1.3 million from 2012 to 2014.

This is part of the authority's battle to save £65m over the next three years.

Since April 2009, all Walsall libraries have been closed on Mondays in a bid to save costs.

## The hole pint of a well is...



Tony Madani shows off the well under the bar at The Miners Arms in Rushall

Drinkers at a Walsall pub could be forgiven for thinking they've had one too many when they go to the bar and see a 50ft-deep well.

But the illuminated hole is a feature of The Miners Arms, Rushall.

The mysterious well was discovered during a revamp of the 19th century pub.

But instead of hiding it away under floorsboards and forgetting about it, new licensee Tony Madani has decided to make it a showpiece – even

adding a bulb and a glass lid.

Regulars at the Lichfield Road pub were shocked to discover the well, which had been underneath their feet the whole time.

It is located just under the old bar counter and some believe it may have been there since the pub was built in the 1840s.

Mr Madani, aged 53, said the well was now a talking point in the local community and would feature prominently in his future design plans.

## Turning ban bid for safety

Cars could be stopped from turning into a busy Bloxwich street in a bid to improve pedestrian safety.

Walsall Council has unveiled plans to stop drivers travelling northbound along the A34 High Street, Bloxwich, from turning left into Bell Lane.

They also plan to stop motorists turning right into Bell Lane when travelling southbound along the A34 Stafford Road.

A public notice has now been produced asking for people's views on the move, which is part of a raft of measures to improve Bloxwich High Street.

Walsall's transport chief Councillor Tom Ansell said: "During our consultation for the improvements to Bloxwich High Street we had a large number of requests to introduce pedestrian facilities at the Bell Lane junction."

The junction currently has no crossing facilities but Councillor Ansell said installing a push-button crossing would "severely increase congestion" at the junction.

"We are therefore installing pedestrian refuges, tactile paving and dropped kerbs to allow safe pedestrian crossing at the junction without a push button," he said.

"However, in order to ensure we provide safe facilities we need to limit the flow of traffic turning into Bell Lane." Objections to the proposed order can be put in writing to council chiefs.

## Accident rule on pensioner

A pensioner who suffered a fall at a Willenhall care home died as a result of an accident, an inquest ruled.

Florence May King, aged 88, was found collapsed on the floor at Winhala Court, Sandbeds Road, Short Heath, on December 17.

Black Country coroner Mr Robin Balmain told the inquest held at Walsall Manor Hospital last week Mrs King, a widow, was discovered unconscious near her bed by two carers who went to check her shortly after 7am. He said she died at the hospital later the same day.

Mr Balmain said there was no way of knowing what caused Mrs King to fall. He told the hearing a CT scan showed the pensioner had suffered a substantial bleed in the brain, the cause of her death.

He told Mrs King's son Terry, of The Crescent, he would record the death as a result of an accident.

## Officer to face trial on fraud charges

A detective constable with West Midlands Police will stand trial at Wolverhampton Crown Court accused of a £4,000 fraud.

Stephen Murphy, of Pinfield Lane, Aldridge, pleaded not guilty to 16 charges relating to fraud by representation.

The 40-year-old is accused of cashing housing benefit cheques for a tenant who had moved out, between July 2007 and December 2008. The trial has been set for July 4 and is expected to last up to four days.

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## Driver handed award

A Walsall man has proved he has the drive for success after scooping a top industry award.

Steve Ward, of Park Road, Bloxwich, was named as Fleet Driver of the Year at the Motor Transport Awards for his work with TNT Express Services.

The 59-year-old impressed judges with his green approach to safe and fuel efficient driving, as well as for a charity drive around the UK.

Mr Ward navigated through the recent snow and ice in a specially-decorated 44ft lorry depicting a giant cheque for £305,137 – the total amount donated by TNT employees to a children's charity Wooden Spoon last year.

He took the lorry on a two-week tour of TNT depots, including Cannock, Worcester and Birmingham, to show employees how much they'd raised.

A former heating engineer, Mr Ward came out of semi-retirement to join TNT in 2001 and said he was delighted with the award.

"I may have been the one singled out for the award but I owe it all to a number of people, especially my colleagues, Neil McCallum, our Operations Manager and Dave Copping our Team Leader in Operations Training," Mr Ward said.

"I consider myself to be incredibly fortunate to be doing a job I love for a great company."

## Volunteers forum date

Managers of voluntary groups in Walsall are being invited to meet other team leaders to share ideas and information.

The next meeting of the Volunteers Managers' Network will be on February 28.

The forum meets at Central Hall Methodist Church, Ablewell Street, from 10.30am to 1pm.

To book call 01922 619840.

## Party invite

Senior citizens in Pelsall are being invited to book places for a party. The bash is for any resident over 60 and will be held at Pelsall Community Centre, Station Road, on January 29. It is a free event. Residents should contact 07960 503512 to book.

## 14 sites are failing pupils in exams tally

Fourteen schools in the West Midlands are failing pupils in their GCSE exams, league tables suggested today.

The worst performers in Walsall were those recently put into special measures by school inspector Ofsted.

At Frank F Harrison Engineering College in Bloxwich, 24 per cent of children gained at least five A\* to C grades including English and maths, while at nearby Sneyd Community

School, which is due to close this summer, it was 27 per cent.

At Blue Coat School, which was given a notice to improve by Ofsted, 30 per cent of pupils got at least five A\* to C grades including English and maths.

Grace Academy in Darlaston, and Willenhall School Sports College in Furzehank Way, were also classed as poor with 32 per cent achieving at least five A\* to C grades including

English and maths. Graham Talbot, interim managing director for Walsall Children's Services – Serco, said: "The local authority continues to support these schools in partnership with the Black Country Challenge making effective links with other schools and the deployment of local and national leaders of education to continue to drive up standards."

Many schools in Walsall improved

on last year's results, although it kept its position of 131st out of 151.

All students at Queen Mary's Grammar and Queen Mary's High School achieved five A\* to C GCSE grades, including English and maths, and both schools were ranked in the top 200 nationally. St Francis of Assisi Catholic Technology College showed the most improvement, where 79 per cent reached the same level, an increase of 21 per cent.

# Schools have reason to celebrate results

walsallchronicle@ expressandstar.co.uk

Schools in Walsall are celebrating rising GCSE results despite the authority maintaining its lowly position in the national league tables.

Figures show 49.5 per cent of students gained five or more GCSEs at grades A\*-C, including English and maths, compared to 44 per cent last year.

Walsall has stayed the same as last year in the national league tables, ranking 131 out of 151. The highest achievers were Queen Mary's Grammar and Queen Mary's High School.

At those schools, 100 per cent of student achieved five or more GCSEs at grades A\*-C, including English and maths.

The school which made the most improvement was St Francis of Assisi Catholic Technology College where 79 per cent reached this level, an increase of 21 per cent on last year.

### Improvement

An average of 75.3 per cent of students in Walsall gained five or more GCSEs at grades A\*-C, not including English and Maths, compared with 65 per cent last year. Brownhills Community Technology College made the most improvement with 93 per cent of students reaching this level, an increase of 44 percentage points compared to last year.

Queen Mary's Grammar also had the highest points score per candidate for A-levels in the authority with 1107.4, Queen Mary's High School came in second with 978.4 and St Francis of Assisi Catholic Technology College was third with 886.2.

Graham Talbot, interim managing director of Walsall Children's Services at Serco, the private firm which runs the borough's education, said: "We are very pleased with these results and congratulate the students.

"We are delighted that Walsall has shown an improvement of 5.5 percentage points in the measure 5+A\*. C including English and maths and 10 percentage points in 5+A\* C.

Councillor Rachel Andrew, cabinet member for children's services, added: "These results reflect the hard work taking place in our schools every day. Through partnership we will continue to provide support to schools in our joint commitment to transform learning in Walsall."

## Table shows how your child's school rated

### Walsall

	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i
Abu Bakr Boys School	20	65%	6	326.9	0%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Abu Bakr Girls School</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>354.9</b>	<b>35%</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Aldridge School Science College	260	62%	7	466.2	14%	977.7	696.3	6	3.50%
<b>Alumwell Business &amp; Enterprise College</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>432</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>994.5</b>	<b>541.3</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>7.50%</b>
Barr Beacon Language College	241	67%	5	523.9	13%	1019.7	772.5	5	1.60%
<b>Blue Coat CofE School</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>365.7</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>957.7</b>	<b>469.8</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>8.50%</b>
Brownhills Community College	144	51%	12	482.6	2%	1010.6	590.8	13	4.70%
<b>Emmanuel School</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>
Frank F Harrison Engineering College	152	24%	23	430.6	1%	1024.4	556.6	15	7.80%
<b>Grace Academy, Darlaston</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>359.6</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>971.9</b>	<b>551.1</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>8.70%</b>
Hydesville Tower School	33	82%	3	391.4	12%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Joseph Leckie Community College</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>295.4</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>952.1</b>	<b>582.9</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8.50%</b>
Palfrey Girls School	40	45%	5	448.3	0%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Pool Hayes Arts &amp; Community School</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>457.3</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>991.6</b>	<b>689.6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4.60%</b>
Queen Mary's Grammar School	96	100%	1	596.3	68%	1019.3	1107.4	1	0.00%
<b>Queen Mary's High School</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>516.7</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>997.2</b>	<b>978.4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0.00%</b>
St Francis of Assisi Technology College	180	79%	4	493.1	6%	1008.3	886.2	3	1.10%
<b>St Thomas More Catholic School</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>430.7</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>990.6</b>	<b>690.9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3.10%</b>
Second Chances	4	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Sheffield Community Academy</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>587.4</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>1049.7</b>	<b>685.2</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4.10%</b>
Shire Oak School Science College	224	54%	10	470.6	15%	996.4	773	4	4.40%
<b>Sneyd Community School</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>302.1</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>948.2</b>	<b>547.5</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>10.70%</b>
The Streetly School, Sutton Coldfield	242	56%	9	498.1	13%	1011.3	623.8	12	3.50%
<b>Walsall Academy</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>632.7</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>1002.6</b>	<b>635.4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0.80%</b>
Walsall College	0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	489.3	19	n/a
<b>Willenhall School Sports College</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>468.5</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>1002.3</b>	<b>629.9</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>8.10%</b>

This shows every secondary school, listed alphabetically for each local education authority area and, from left to right, after the school name and details, the table shows:

- a. The number of pupils eligible for GCSE and equivalent qualifications. This is defined as the number of pupils at the start of Key Stage 4, which usually means all pupils in Year 11.
- b. The proportion of candidates getting five A\* to C-grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and maths.
- c. The rank within its local authority which the school achieved according to the proportion of pupils getting five Cs in GCSE subjects including English and maths. Ties are broken by average GCSE points score.
- d. The average GCSE points score per pupil. GCSEs and qualifications judged to be "equivalent" to GCSEs are assigned points. For example, a GCSE, grade B = 46 points; National Certificate in Business, merit = 196 points. There are too many qualifications now being included to list each one alongside its points score.
- e. The percentage of pupils achieving the English Baccalaureate (see notes to Table 5 for explanation).
- f. The school's Key Stage 2 (age 11) to GCSE contextual value-added score (see notes to Table 7 for explanation).
- g. The A-Level points score per candidate, including other "equivalent" qualifications.
- h. The rank within its local authority the school achieved according to its A-Level points score per candidate. Ties are broken by the average number of points scored per exam entry (figure not shown).
- i. The percentage of pupils who were persistently absent.

**NOTE: Care should be taken when comparing results for schools with small numbers of pupils eligible for the exams.**

## Scheme to transform transport

Drivers could be squeezed out and car lanes reduced under plans to transform some of the busiest routes in the Black Country and Birmingham into "low carbon corridors".

Among those routes being considered is the A449 Stafford Road in Wolverhampton, where £2.4m was invested in a red route that was scrapped amid complaints just 18 months later. The 404 bus route through Dudley, Sandwell and Walsall is also being looked at to pilot the initiative.

West Midlands transport authority Centro is preparing a bid for between £50m and £60m of the government's Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) to pay for the project.

It aims to encourage people to change their travel habits to ease congestion on the roads. But critics warned the move could spell more misery for motorists.

It would see the introduction of new lanes for fleets of super green electric and hybrid buses, cycle lanes, electric car charging points and car sharing schemes along some of the region's busiest routes.

Traffic plans for neighbouring businesses and schools would also be developed to reduce the number of cars on the roads.

Residents would be door-stepped to be given help and advice on journeys and switching to greener methods of travel.

People would also be encouraged to walk and cycle more to not only change their travel behaviour but also embrace healthier lifestyles.

Centro says each low carbon corridor would be tailored to meet community needs.

The LSTF, amounting to £560m between 2011/12 and 2014/15, is available to transport authorities outside London to bid for funding.

## Anything goes for music group

A Walsall music group is preparing for its next production later in the year up and running but is looking for more cast members.

Aldridge Musical Comedy Society is beginning preparations to make sure that its next show is all ship shape and Bristol fashion by presenting Cole Porter's delightful musical farce Anything Goes in May.

The show is set on the ocean liner the S.S. American and will feature such classic songs as You're the Tops, Blow Gabriel Blow and of course the show's title number Anything Goes.

The society is on the lookout for new crew members. Chairman, Julie Lamb said: "Anything Goes is a huge production, and as is the case with most societies we're looking to boost our male chorus. We have a great production team and are looking forward to yet another wonderful production, but we do have parts that we need to fill."

"Rehearsals began on 5th January, we rehearse each Tuesday and Wednesday evening at The Keeling Dance Studio in Aldridge and would welcome any new faces with open arms."

Aldridge Musical Comedy Society will be presenting Anything Goes at the Prince of Wales Theatre Cannock, from May 11-14. Anyone interested in joining the production can contact Julie Lamb on 07885634284.

## Casino is to reopen after £1.5m revamp

A Walsall casino will reopen at the end of February after a £1.5 million revamp.

Grosvenor Casino in Bentley Mill Way, Walsall, will relaunch as G Casino, with 20 members of staff added to its 75-strong workforce. G Casino will offer 24-hour gambling. General manager Matt Rudd said: "We are working hard to remove some of the barriers often associated with casinos."



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# Massive operation to tackle the potholes

walsallchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

A mammoth operation to repair thousands of potholes across the Midlands is under way.

In some areas, dedicated teams of inspectors have been tasked with scouring the streets in a bid to highlight the worst-hit spots.

Councils are facing bills for millions of pounds in repairs. In Walsall, a dedicated team of inspectors has been asked to pinpoint the borough's worst roads.

Transport chief Councillor Tom Ansell, said weather-related repairs were expected to cost around £400,000.

"We have four inspectors who are working constantly to assess the borough's roads and identify potholes to be repaired. They are working alongside our partners Tarmac who are responsible for repairing the defects," he added.

Problem roads in the Walsall area include Willenhall Road, Lazy Hill Road in Aldridge and Queslett Road in Great Barr. Proffitt Street in North Walsall, Stafford Street and Moat Road near to Walsall Manor Hospital have also been described as treacherous.

## Freezing

In Staffordshire the cost of repairing potholes is expected to top £1.85 million.

Highways inspectors have sourced 600 new road defects caused by freezing conditions between December 1 and today. Specialist pothole patrols are using satellite technology to locate faults before beaming back details to a central control centre.

Dudley Council also has five inspectors monitoring roads in the borough on an ongoing basis and are asking members of the public to report any potholes near to their homes.

In Sandwell officers are drawing up a priority list of problem areas and the council is set to spend £700,000 on repairs.

Large cracks and holes have also opened up along stretches of the Birmingham New Road, which runs through both Sandwell and Dudley from Birmingham to Wolverhampton, while taxi drivers in Wolverhampton have reported problems along other major routes.

And Lily Street in West Bromwich was closed for the day while Sandwell Council carried out emergency repairs to the road.

## Veteran vets celebrating 25 years



Celebrating 25 years in business is head vet Richard Hillman from Hillman Vets.

It has brought comfort to thousands of families over the years by treating countless poorly pets, and now a Walsall vets is celebrating its 25th anniversary.

Chief vet Richard Hillman established the surgery, Hillman Vets, with just himself and one nurse all those years ago but now has six branches across the region.

Mr Hillman said it had been a lot of hard work but his team was now "rightly proud" of the little empire. The other branches are in Palfrey, Brownhills, Cannock, Darlaston and Lichfield.

Practice manager Jacky Hands has been working for Mr Hillman for seven years.

She said: "Everybody has meetings together, and everybody knows each other. We have separate branches but we aren't separate entities, we are one team. At every branch you get the same service."

From its humble beginnings, the surgery now offers the latest technological treatment, such as ultrasound scanning, a biochemistry machine and a dental theatre.

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# Main route in line for major work

A "dilapidated" main route into Walsall is included in plans for the regeneration of a neighbourhood, council chiefs say.

Walsall Council bosses say Stafford Street will be included in plans for the regeneration of Birchills, which are currently being put together.

It comes after Blakenall councillor Pete Smith tabled a question at a recent meeting of the full council, asking what action will be taken "to address the situa-

## Serco is an award winner

An anti-bullying strategy in Walsall has won a national award.

Walsall Children's Services Serco, the private company in charge of borough education, won the title at the Children and Young People Now awards.

It was a double triumph for Walsall as Joseph Leckie Community Technology College received the extended schools award for doing the most to engage with the wider community.

Serco's strategy was said to be the most effective in reducing bullying and the harm it causes.

Sharon Tott, head of access and entitlement, said the award was a recognition of the hard work of Serco, its partners and young people.

## Christian art

Contemporary Christian artwork is on display in Walsall. The exhibition containing 23 pieces of work by Christine Capewell, aged 58, of Aldridge, is on show at The Crossing at St Pauls, in Darwell Street, until February 7.

## Sister Dora's fame spreads

Sister Dora's fame article on great has spread world wide. Mr wide thanks to an historian who visited Walsall. Andre Kuczewski collected facts about the nurse and Walsall's heritage. He and wife, Carmen, of Montreal, Canada, run a website and want an



Historian Andre Kuczewski meets Sim Mayou as he researches Sister Dora.

tion of long time boarded up properties on one of the main arterial routes to Walsall from the north of the borough."

# It's there in black and white, 50 year old TV Reg's set has kept tuning in for decades

walsallchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

While many are snapping up 3D TVs and embracing the digital revolution, one Walsall family is sticking with the faithful black and white portable they bought almost 50 years ago.

Since 1964, a 14-inch black and white TV has been a fixture in the home of pensioners Stan and Joan Buckler, of Darlaston.

After almost five decades it is still going strong. Every morning the couple switch on their trusted set to watch the latest news headlines. Although the couple do have a modern 32-inch television, they do not want to part with their Ferguson TV.

However, the digital switch over later this year is likely to render their set redundant.

## Discount

The TV was bought when Mrs Buckler, now aged 81, joined the MEB and was granted a discount on the set in 1964.

Since then it has been a permanent fixture at their Heathfield Lane home.

Channels are changed by rotating a button on the front and despite its lack of mod cons, Mr Buckler, aged 80, said he would be sad to see it go.

## Quality

"I still watch the news on it every morning while I have my breakfast," said the former draughtsman and senior contracts engineer at Gibbons Brothers in Brierley Hill.

"I wouldn't have expected it to last this long but the picture quality is still good."

Mr Buckler said the television just keeps on going.

"I am amazed the picture still comes on," he said.

"I can't remember how much it cost but it just keeps soldiering on. It will be a shame when digital comes in and I can't use it."

"But we may just keep it for sentimental reasons."



Joan Buckler with her Ferguson TV which is still going strong after nearly 50 years.

A television set which has been going strong for 40 years is still providing hours of happy viewing for a Walsall couple.

Reginald Burfoot and his wife Kathleen bought the Sony Trinitron 13in colour TV to use in their caravan in 1981 – when it had already been in use for a decade.

Now based in the spare bedroom of their St George's Street home in Darlaston, even though it is often switched off for several months, it springs back into life when required.

Retired bread salesman Mr Burfoot, now 80, said: "A London museum once wanted to take it off us. Some years ago I rang them up because they were advertising for a television of that age.

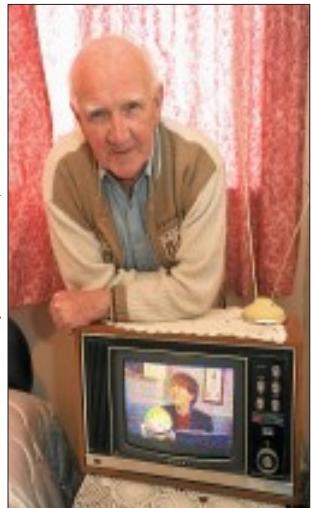
## History

"When I phoned them up to see if they were interested in mine they told me all about the history of the model, but wouldn't offer any money for it, just tickets for 12 months in exchange. So I decided to keep it instead. It's useful if anything goes wrong with our modern model."

"It has a portable aerial, but you can still get a decent picture. I've got no reason to get rid of it and unless someone comes up with the right price I'm going to keep it."

"We bought it in 1981 from a chap at a holiday caravan park for £90 because we had bought a caravan and needed a TV for it. It's never broke since I've owned it. Sometimes I leave it for a few months then I'll switch it on to give it a bit of an airing," Mr Burfoot said.

The model was built with a brown wooden case, a common feature of 1970s models. Mr Burfoot, who has lived in Darlaston all his life, worked at Hickinbottom & Sons bakery in Wednesbury which baked Sunblest, and Scribbins bakery, Hockley, Birmingham which had a depot in Walsall. The couple have lived in their home since 1971.



Reginald Burfoot, 80, of Darlaston with his working 1971, 13inch, Sony Trinitron TV.

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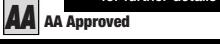


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# 19 to lose jobs as axe falls on £52m project

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expressandstar.co.uk

Nineteen people will lose their jobs when a £52 million regeneration project comes to an end in Walsall.

Walsall New Deal for Communities (NDC) will close on March 31, resulting in council staff being made redundant.

From April 1, five new non-council jobs will be created for the New Horizons Community Enterprise charitable company, which will continue the Walsall NDC legacy.

The project, formed in 2001 to regenerate Blakenall, Bloxwich and Leamore, has proven to be one of the most successful in the country.

## Nationwide

In the 39-strong performance list of New Deal schemes nationwide, Walsall came in seventh.

Wolverhampton was 14th, Sandwell 26th and Birmingham Kings Norton bottom of the table at 39th.

A report to council bosses said the Walsall scheme had created an "attractive environment and a place where people want to live".

Blaenall, Bloxwich and Leamore were selected for regeneration in 2000 after it was revealed they were in the top 10 per cent of deprived areas in the country.

The revamp has included the creation of more than 300 new homes and improvements to the three main shopping centres.

The £8.34m Blakenall Village Centre was also built, offering health, housing, library and community services all under one roof.

A total of £4.8 million was also spent on the Stan Ball over-50s centre and £919,000 on the Young Person's Information Centre, offering health, education and training services to 11 to 19-year-olds.

thechronicle

## Fire drama follows collision



The dramatic crash scene in Lucknow Road, Willenhall, is caught on camera.



Fire crews at the scene of the accident involving a Land Rover and Fiesta.

This was the dramatic scene when a car collided with another and burst into flames.

A Land Rover Discovery and Ford Fiesta crashed in Lucknow Road, Willenhall, last week. The male driver of the Land Rover, aged 70, is believed to have suffered a

heart attack and lost control.

The impact sent the Fiesta ploughing into another three cars, setting it on fire, with flames spreading to the Rover. Both drivers managed to get out of their cars before firefighters from Bloxwich and Walsall arrived. The Land

Rover driver was taken to New Cross Hospital, Wolverhampton, while the female driver of the Ford Fiesta was given a precautionary check-up by paramedics. The road was closed for two hours to clear the scene and carry out investigations.

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The £8.34m Blakenall Village Centre was also built, offering health, housing, library and community services all under one roof.

A total of £4.8 million was also spent on the Stan Ball over-50s centre and £919,000 on the Young Person's Information Centre, offering health, education and training services to 11 to 19-year-olds.

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# Applications sent in for scrutiny

Planning applications submitted to Walsall Council include:

**498 to 500 Pleck Road, Walsall:** change of use from car showroom to off licence. **Former Redhouse School, Gorse Way, Aldridge:** reserved matters application to determine appearance, layout and scale for 24 houses, to build the community centre after occupation of the houses. **49 Northgate, Aldridge:** two-storey side and single-storey rear extension with roof lights to front and rear.

**Land fronting Willenhall Road, Darlaston:** none material amendment – increase length of proposed building.

**7 Westbourne Road, Darlaston:** single-storey rear extension.

**Land rear of 13 Broadway, Walsall:** change of use from residential garden

**176 Bloxwich Road, Walsall:** change of use from A1 Retail to A5 hot food take-away. **Homebargains, Town Centre Shopping Centre, Samuel Street, Bloxwich:** Replace existing trolley bay.

**Castings PLC, Gatehouse Trading Estate, Lichfield Road, Brownhills:** new warehouse and car park with associated internal service roads and landscaping. **1 Woodside Close, Walsall:** demolition of existing building and construction of 14, two bedroom apartments.

**10 Park Road, Walsall:** two-storey side extension and single-storey front and rear extensions.

**Land rear of 13 Broadway, Walsall:** change of use from residential garden

land to storage area for materials, plant and equipment related to the maintenance and upkeep of the golf course and grounds together with occasional overspill car parking. **12 Park Road, Walsall:** proposed first floor side extension.

**55 Charlemont Road, Walsall:** two-storey side extension, single-storey rear extension and detached play room/store in garden. **435 West Bromwich Road, Walsall:** two-storey side and rear extension to lounge, kitchen, bedrooms and bathroom. **Land corner of Tame Drive, Walsall Road, Pelsall:** erection of dwelling on corner of Tame Drive/Walsall Road with detached garage and parking and external works.

## Foundry fortunes pick up

A foundry in Walsall which was forced to axe 35 jobs when the recession has had some better fortune thanks to a revival in the motor industry.

Bosses at Chamberlin & Hill, which manufactures castings for vehicles have been helped in their recovery by the growing turbocharger market, picking up new business in the Far East. A total of 124 work in the foundry at the Chuchery Road plant and around 30 in the office. The firm makes castings for luxury cars including BMW and Porsche.

The foundry has now attracted orders from the rising economies of China and India.

Production of new turbocharger parts is due to start this year.

The company recently went back up to full-time working with overtime shifts added.

Bosses say the weakness of the pound has also helped.

## Sarah aims to get under people's skin

A self-taught tattoo artist has opened her own studio in Walsall after being inspired by her late father.

Sarah Carter, 24, of Aldridge, launched her tattoo and art studio, Human Canvas, in the Victorian Arcade, Bradford Street.

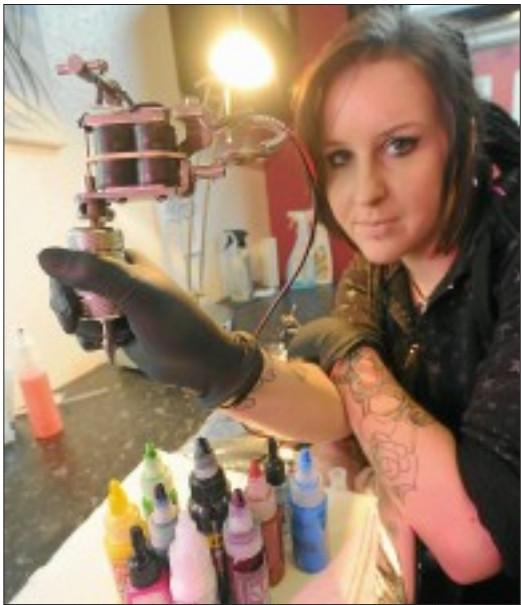
The mother-of-two was encouraged by father, Andy Humphries, who died of a brain haemorrhage in 2008, aged 46.

Opening the studio created two apprentice positions. A self-employed body piercer will also work there. Mrs Carter was given her first tattoo machine at 17 by father-of-four and self-employed builder Mr Humphries. She said: "My dad always wanted me to run my own shop."

Mrs Carter, who has 14 tattoos and gave herself some, did a business management course at Breathing Space, Green, Walsall, and got a £1,000 bursary from the organisation.

The studio sells paintings, art prints, jewellery and accessories.

Visit [www.humancanvas-tattoo.co.uk](http://www.humancanvas-tattoo.co.uk) or email [humancanvas@live.co.uk](mailto:humancanvas@live.co.uk).



Sarah Carter who has opened her own tattoo studio.

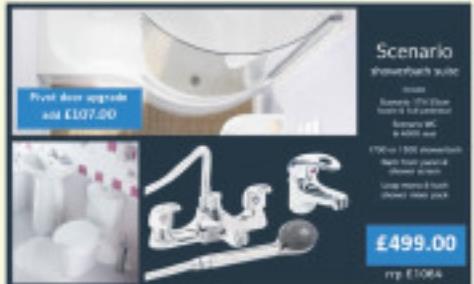
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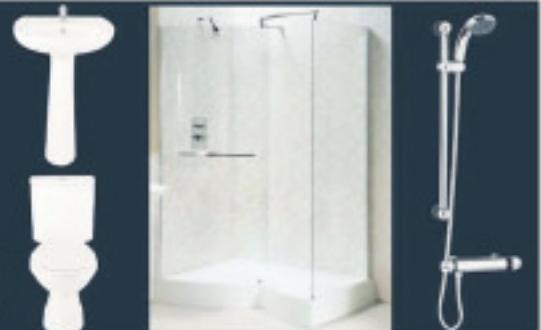
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# Calls for review over gritting town streets

walsallchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

Traders in Willenhall have demanded a review of gritting in the town, claiming untreated streets led to a drop in visits from pre-Christmas shoppers.

Angry shopkeepers have hit out, saying town centre streets were not treated as they have been in previous years.

But council chiefs refuted the claims, insisting the streets had been tackled by the borough's grit teams.

Butcher Tony Butler, who runs Conway's in Market Place, claims pensioners and other shoppers had been put off venturing into the town.

"I was out delivering orders two hours after I'd closed on Christmas Eve just because people couldn't get into the town," he said.

## Tears

"I had one elderly woman who rang in tears because she had come down on the bus but couldn't walk through the town and had to go back. I took the order to her."

"I haven't seen anyone gritting the roads or any evidence of grit at all and this is the first year I can say that."

"In the past, they used to clear all the snow and pile it up on the Walks ground nearby."

Councillor Carl Creaney, representative for Walsall South, called for a review of the way district centre streets are handled in the snow.

He said: "I've spoken to a lot of traders and shopkeepers in the town who have all said the same thing – the roads had not been treated."

Walsall Council's traffic and transportation manager Glyn Oliver insisted Willenhall town centre had been gritted during the Christmas period. "It is included within our winter plan, which was agreed by cabinet in autumn," he said.

He said a mixture of salt and grit was used on December 21 and 22.



Carl Creaney and Tony Butler in Market Place.

## Calendars now on sale

Calendars depicting how people used to live in Walsall are now available.

Graphic designer John Griffiths has produced the 2011 calendar, which is the sixth in the series, called Walsall Lives – Remembering the Old Town.

It is available from Athwael News, in Leicester Street, Curio Shop, in George Street, Heaven Sent at The Crossing at St Pauls, in Darwall Street, Waterstones, in Park Street, Walsall Leather Museum, in Littleton Street West, and Walsall Local History Centre, in Essex Street, priced at £6.99.

## Chill factor

A display showing how women used to keep warm in the mid-1900s will remain at Walsall Museum until the end of this month. A Chill in the Air is on display in Lichfield Street and includes woollen dresses, thick skirts and cardigans from the 1920s to 60s.

## Extension on payment

Developers are set to be given a time extension to pay more than £100,000 to Walsall Council as part of a planning agreement.

Just over £102,000 is due as part of a deal allowing 215 and 217 Lichfield Road to be pulled down to make way for a 21-home estate.

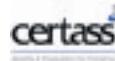
Planning permission was granted in 2008 subject to contributions towards open space and education. It is due when work starts on the project, but developers are asking for this to be delayed until the 10th home is occupied.

  
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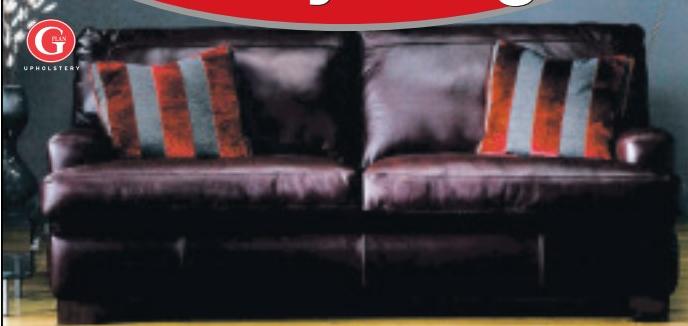
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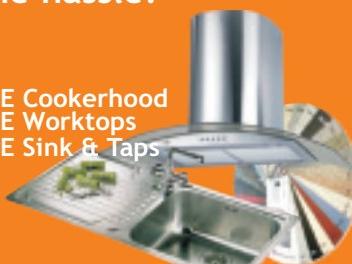
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To celebrate the relaunch we're offering one lucky reader, plus five friends, the chance to be treated like A-listers at the official VIP launch party on 24th February 2011!

The prize will include a limousine to the casino, champagne reception on arrival, a delicious meal in The Gallery Restaurant, complimentary drinks and a private "how to play" session with one of the casino's experienced croupiers.

Guests can also enjoy live entertainment throughout the evening and have their photos taken by a professional photographer.

G Casino Walsall is ideal for a great night out. With free entry 24-hours a day, G Casino Walsall offers a wide range of gaming facilities for beginners to experienced players. It also offers an extensive menu

of wines and cocktails in its contemporary lounge area, great value food in the restaurant, as well as regular live entertainment. It really is one amazing venue, one great night out!

To win this fantastic prize, simply answer the following question: What is the name of the restaurant in the casino?

- A. The Gallery  
B. The Museum  
C. The Aquarium

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#### Terms and Conditions:

- Entrants must be over 18 years of age
- Competition closes on Friday February 4 2011

- The prize must be taken on February 24 2011
- Entrants must register at the casino to receive their prize
- Winners and their nominated guests must bring photo ID on the evening
- By accepting the prize, winners are agreeing to publicity.
- The prize is for a maximum of six people



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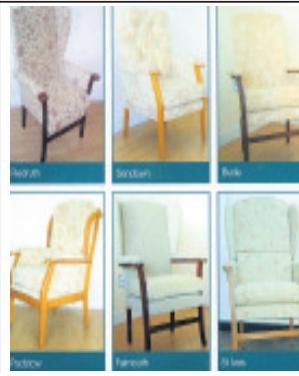
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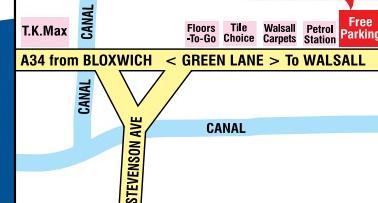
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# Future of fields to be considered after tests

walsallchronicle@  
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The future of contaminated playing fields in Walsall will be considered within the next few weeks after the completion of fresh tests to determine their re-opening for sports.

Ball games have been banned at Broadway West Playing Fields for more than seven years on health and safety grounds.

Cash to carry out more tests on the land was secured by Walsall Council at the end of last year. The results are now being analysed and are expected back inside the next few weeks, and a decision on use could be made before spring.

The site has continued to be used by dog walkers, despite sports being banned, after reassurance they were not at any immediate risk.

### Pollution

Leisure and environment chief councilor Anthony Harris said: "Additional funding was identified to carry out extra soil tests on the playing fields in Broadway West. This was to check pollution levels in the soil but I would stress there is no immediate risk to people."

"Despite some delays caused by the icy weather the main sampling work and laboratory analysis has now been completed. "These results now need to be scientifically assessed and we hope this will be completed in the next few weeks."

Council chiefs agreed to re-evaluate the health risks posed by the fields last year. Games were stopped in 2003 due to the discovery of dangerous metals.

Stopping sports came just five months after a cash windfall of £150,000 to develop pitches and facilities was received.

At least 10 sports clubs used the playing fields, including Walsall Star Cricket Club and Bescot Swifts Junior Football Club, and had to find alternative venues.

Obesity experts branded the move to keep the fields closed to ball games as "plain stupid" while parents have also been left bemused.

Vaughan is the elephant man



Mr England Vaughan Bailey helping to look after young elephant Ganesh Vijay.

Walsall's very own Mr England Vaughan Bailey has become something of an elephant man after being made an ambassador to a Midlands zoo.

Vaughan, who is the first black Mr England, has been made an ambassador for Twycross Zoo in Warwickshire.

The model and presenter, aged 23, took time out from his preparations for next month's Mr World contest in China to tour the zoo and meet one of its biggest attractions, Ganesh Vijay, Twycross's first baby elephant conceived by Artificial Insemination.

Vaughan helped feed the 15-month old youngster who already weighs more than 45 stone, with treats of grapes and bananas and watched as the elephant keepers washed Vijay and the rest of the 5-strong herd before putting them through their daily training programme designed to

make it easier to give medical treatments.

"I'm really proud to be a Celebrity Ambassador for Twycross" said Vaughan, who recently won the Personality category at world's top male model in Taiwan.

"I've always been fascinated by animals but this was the first time I'd ever fed an elephant; it was a brilliant feeling. He's got the same birthday as me too."

Vaughan later met several of the zoo's other 'stars'. He is now spending hours in the gym and following a strict, low-carb diet in the run-up to the Mr World contest ("it helps define your abs".)

He will also star in a Sky TV reality show called 'Hunks' next month and has received scores of lucrative modelling and TV offers plus a role in a gritty feature film in March.

For more details: visit: [www.twycross-zoo.org](http://www.twycross-zoo.org).

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# More signing up to meals scheme

Around 120 people have signed up to a new meals on wheels service in Walsall, as hundreds of pensioners get used to a new way of receiving their daily food.

The Taste for Life scheme delivers hot or frozen meals to people's homes and in future will help some pensioners enjoy meals at luncheon clubs.

So far, 53 people have expressed an interest in attending clubs. The new system comes after Walsall Council's contract with provider Sodexo ended, as chiefs try to save £1 million over three years on the scheme.

Users of Taste for Life, run by Caldmore Housing Association, Age UK Walsall, Walsall Housing Regeneration Agency and other agencies, gave the service the thumbs-up.

Jean Evans, aged 83, who has had meals cooked by it-care and delivered six days a week, said: "I've been really pleased with it. The drivers are very friendly and attentive. My dinner has always been the best meal of the day. As long as I've got a good dinner I'm happy."

## Problems

"I've had no problems with the changeover at all. I think having a good meal every day and knowing it is going to come without any problems is a big weight off peoples' minds."

But she added the fact the council would no longer be subsidising the meals could make it tough for some people to cope. She currently pays £4.10 for her meal through Taste for Life.

"It could come very hard on some people as the new system could be a bit more expensive for them," she said. "It may only be a pound or so but that's quite a lot for some pensioners."

"But I must say, although I won't be doing it myself I think the luncheon clubs will be a great

walsallchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk



Trying the food are Jean Evans, aged 83, and Jill Green, from Taste for Life.

way for people to meet others," added Miss Evans, who spends one day a week at Little Bloxwich Day Hospice.

Forty people, including Miss Evans, have signed up for Taste for Life's Safe and Well scheme which offers welfare checks.

All 420 people who received meals on wheels under Sodexo were assessed.

Some people have made private arrangements with companies such as The Sandwich Box, in Willenhall, while others have turned to family and friends.

The move is part of a raft of measures to save £65 million over three years.

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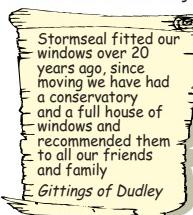
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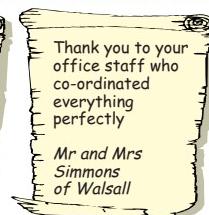
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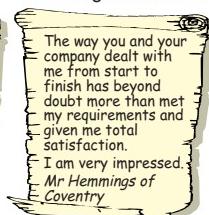
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thechronicle

# £9.5m college plans shown to the public

walsallchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

Detailed plans for the country's first £9.5 million University Technical College (UTC) in Walsall have been unveiled at a public meeting.

The UTC, which will take over the site of doomed Sneyd Community School in Bloxwich and plans to open in September, will offer specialist and technical training for 14 to 19-year-olds.

A roadshow at the Vernon Way school last night launched the process for students across the Black Country to apply for a place – and 20 have already registered an interest.

Around 100 people turned up to hear plans for the UTC, which is Government-funded and will specialise in engineering and science, while also offering core subjects and apprenticeships.

A principal is expected to be appointed next week with a nationwide search for staff due to start by the end of the month. About two-thirds of the 40 posts available are expected to be teaching roles, with the remaining third made up of support staff.

Plans are yet to be finalised on the curriculum before designers can step in and transform the building.

### Enrolling

A total of 240 students are expected to enrol this year, with around another 240 enrolling next year.

Employers will have a big impact on the curriculum and around 20 businesses have already pledged their support, from National Grid to Walsall-based Chamberlin and Hill.

Industry experts are expected to support teachers while postgraduates and undergraduates at Wolverhampton University will mentor students.

School days are expected to run from 8.30am to 3.30pm Monday to Thursday and 8.30am to 4pm on Fridays. Walsall College is the lead sponsor in the project and will be responsible for running the UTC along with co-sponsor Wolverhampton University.

Amrit Basu, principal of Walsall College, said: "This will be a national first. It will be a kickstart for these type of schools to open across the country."

"It seeks to service the local community which extends across the Black Country. Our values will be to support children to be skilled and professional."

## Tribute to Sister Dora



Archdeacon of Walsall the venerable Chris Simms



Mayoress Yvonne Clarke lays flowers.



Mayor Councillor Gary Clarke at the service

49-year-old Sheila Lord, of Willenhall Road, Wolverhampton.

"She worked so tirelessly, and it is important the younger generation learn about the sacrifices she made," she said.

Walsall's mayor Councillor Gary Clarke also paid tribute.

"Sister Dora was such an inspirational figure, and her contribution to Walsall deserved to be remembered," he said.

"I think she would be very proud of the fact that her memory lives on today through the efforts of so many borough residents who are working hard to make a difference in their communities."

Sister Dora arrived in Walsall in 1865 and was adopted by townspeople following a series of disasters after which she nursed those in need and became known for her care and compassion.

She died in 1878 and in 1886 a statue was unveiled of her on The Bridge.

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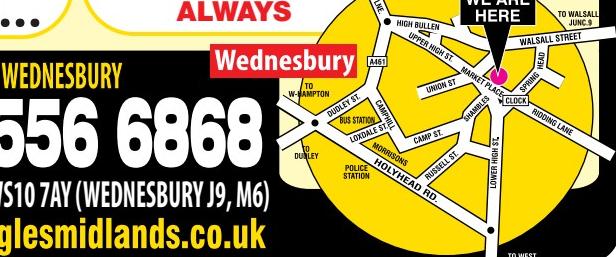
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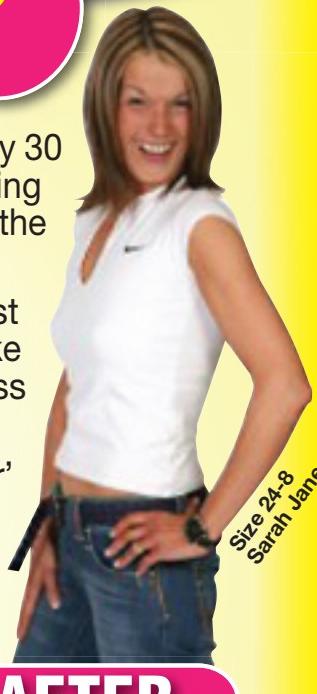
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# Good start to the year for company



An engineer from Darlaston's Hydratight working on one of Shell's North Sea gas facilities in Scotland

Two major new North Sea gas and oil contracts and an industry safety award have kicked off a good start to the year for Darlaston-based engineering company Hydratight.

One is a four-year service and maintenance contract for three of Shell's major North Sea facilities.

Hydratight will handle maintenance and shutdown operations at Shell's St Fergus gas plant at Peterhead in Aberdeenshire, the Mossmorran fractionation plant at Cowdenbeath, Fife, and the Braefoot Bay marine gas terminal near Aberdeen.

It won a five-way tender to supply engineering services and machining work at the facilities, which bring natural gas and other liquids to the mainland from the North Sea.

Hydratight sales engineer John McKay said: "We were able to

show that our health and safety track record and leak-free start-up performance, technical ability and commercial compliance were second to none.

"We have worked with Shell for many years — 18 years at St Fergus — but always previously on a job by job basis. This is a welcome show of confidence in our abilities. We are proud to say we probably have the best technicians on the market for this kind of work."

## Bolting

Hydratight's main role will be providing bolting and machining services during planned shutdowns, but the company will also run a six-hour callout service in emergencies.

The company has also signed a £22 million deal with energy company Statoil to provide bolt-tensioning and other specialist maintenance services covering facilities both on the Norwegian continental shelf and onshore.

This is the first frame agreement — extended maintenance contract — for bolt tensioning. Statoil has entered into and will run initially for three years, with two possible extensions of three years each.

Hydratight will be responsible for pipeline maintenance operations on and around major processing facilities at Mongstad near Bergen and Kårstø near Stavanger, and platforms in the Statfjord, Oseberg, Snorre, Kristin, Kvitebjørn, Visund, Njord and marginal fields — 60% of Statoil's Norwegian assets.

"We are delighted with the agreement, both for Statoil and for ourselves," said Hydratight Norway's business leader, Paul Harrison.

Meanwhile, Hydratight was awarded a coveted five-star safety management rating by the British Safety Council.

The company is now aiming for the BSC's elite Sword of Honour rating, awarded to only 40 organisations worldwide each year.

# Special team in blitz on crimes

A special team of 11 officers has been put together to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour in Walsall as part of a new force-wide crackdown which has been called Operation Intrusive.

It has been launched across the West Midlands and police in Walsall set out their aims for the three-month crackdown.

It will focus on burglary, vehicle crime, robbery, criminal damage and anti-social behaviour.

The special team, made up of a police

sergeant and 10 constables, will target known offenders and carry out school truancy patrols.

Officers are set to use public transport in a bid to drive down the number of criminal incidents, while some will also use bikes to patrol the borough's alleys, subways and off-road areas.

The number of Neighbourhood Watch groups and voluntary groups is also set to be increased under the operation, which ends in March.

Addresses will be visited and residents

will be provided with specialist equipment including alarms and locks.

Some homes will have Smartwater packs delivered allowing them to mark valuables with a special code that can only be seen under ultra-violet light.

Traffic accident hotspots have been identified and automatic number plate recognitions are set to take place.

Anyone with information about criminal behaviour should contact police on 0345 113 500.

## Church gets new minister

A church which runs family activity clubs for the community has welcomed a new minister after years without a permanent leader.

Rev Ruth Wood has taken over the reins at Delves Baptist Church. Mrs Wood, aged 49, was previously at Gaer Baptist Church in Newport, Wales. She is married to Alan, 50, a former aid manager for Samaritan's Purse International. They have two children.

Since the couple arrived in October they have wasted no time getting stuck into projects at the Bell Lane site.

Mrs Wood "The people are ever so friendly and have made us welcome."

## Organ event

An organ recital will be held at Walsall Town Hall on February 2. Peter Morris will entertain an audience at the Lichfield Street venue with organ favourites and classic pieces from 1pm. Guests

will include Jane Eminson on flute. Call 0845 111 2900.

## Demi gets a new pet after shed blaze



Demilea Wood with her new guinea pig called Holly.

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# Marathon man Glyn's milestone



A fundraiser from Walsall has nudged his total over the £100,000 mark after years of pushing himself to the limit.

Glyn Marston, of New Invention, Willenhall, said he has just passed the milestone after more than a decade of helping charities.

He said it was a fantastic way to end 2010. Mr Marston, aged 48, reached the enormous sum by running more than 30 marathons and numerous ultra-marathons of distances between 32 and 145 miles. He said he started running as a way to stop

smoking in 1993. "I quit smoking, but I found it difficult to stay off cigarettes and was getting cravings for nicotine," he said.

"I just thought 'I have got to do something now because I will start smoking again. Within 12 weeks I had run my first marathon."

The Robin Hood Marathon in Nottingham set father-of-two Mr Marston of Essington Road, on a path of constantly trying to better himself.

He ran the London to Brighton 55-mile road race

between 1998 and 2003, and the 145-mile Grand Union Canal race from Birmingham to London for five consecutive years from 2001.

He said: "I have always had a stubborn personality, and that's asked to take part in a 90-mile bike ride for Walsall Hospice.

The hilly challenge will set off from Breathing Space, in Green Lane, Walsall, on April 3.

Cyclists will visit the Midland business networking organisation Gone Fishing 4 Business venues in Cannock, Derby and Branston before returning to Breathing Space via Walsall Hospice, Goscole. Visit [www.tms.co.uk/challenge](http://www.tms.co.uk/challenge).

## Hospice cyclists wanted

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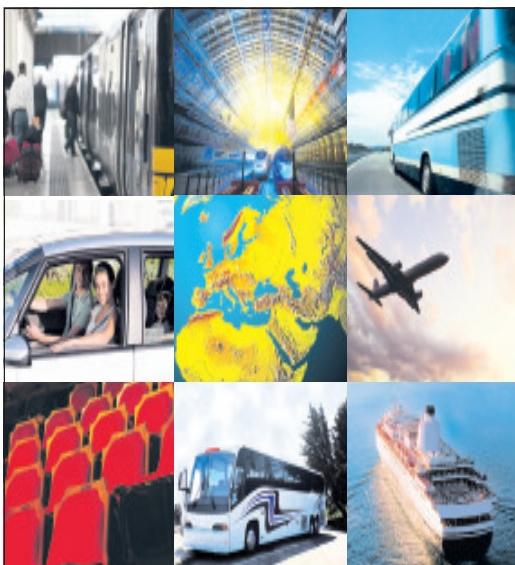
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## Plaque honouring boxing club's founder Joe



Joe Wood with his grandson Jack, front right, and club manager Steven Kelly unveiling the plaque at Pleck Working Men's Club, Scarborough Road.



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### THE GREEN HORNET FROM JAN 14

It's going to be another year for comic book heroes with The Green Lantern and Thor in the pipeline but the first of the bunch is The Green Hornet with Britt Reid played by Seth Rogen, as the son and heir to Los Angeles' largest newspaper fortune.

Just like Bruce Wayne aka Batman he is a rich, spoilt playboy who has been happy to drift through life doing whatever his fortune allows.

However, the death of his father James Reid played by Tom Wilkinson, brings Britt into contact with employee Kato, a role taken on by the late great Bruce Lee in the TV series but this time played by Jay Chou.

Their social consciences are collectively pricked and Kato builds The Black Beauty, the inevitable and indestructible car which no comic book hero should be without and as you would expect comes with every weapon imaginable. The twist this time comes as Britt decides that to be heroes, they will pose as villains.

Cameron Diaz adds the glamour as Reid's new secretary, Lenore Case and of course you can't have a hero without a nemesis, stand up Christopher Waltz as Mr Big, Benjamin Chudnofsky who has all the gangs under his power - cue the action.

Visit [www.sonypictures.com/movies/the-greenhornet/](http://www.sonypictures.com/movies/the-greenhornet/)

### CONVICTION – THE TRUE STORY OF BETTY ANNE WATERS FROM JAN 14

This inspirational story stars Hilary Swank as Betty Anne who is devoted to her brother Kenny, played by Sam Rockwell who was sentenced to life for murder in the 1980s.

Convinced of his innocence Massachusetts mother and wife, Betty, sets about devoting her life to overturning the conviction.

She puts herself through high school, college and, finally, law school in an 18-year quest to free him. With the help of best friend Minnie Driver as Abra Rice she dissects the evidence and pushes herself and everyone around her to the limit to achieve her goal.

### MORNING GLORY FROM JAN 21

In this romantic comedy Becky Fuller, Rachel McAdams, is a young producer who must save her TV show and her love life.

Visit [www.foxsearchlight.com/blackswan/](http://www.foxsearchlight.com/blackswan/)

# ENTERTAINMENT AT THE MOVIES



### THE MECHANIC FROM JAN 28

This remake of the 1970s Charles Bronson classic has Arthur Bishop played by Jason Statham who is the mechanic of the title - an assassin with a strict code and a unique talent for cleanly eliminating targets.

Bishop is the best there is, a professional perfectionist with total detachment.

But when his mentor and close friend Harry, Donald Sutherland, is murdered, Bishop shows human weakness.

He chooses his next assignment and wants those responsible eliminated.

However, Harry's son Steve played by Ben Foster complicates matters when he shows a determination to learn Bishop's trade. Bishop decides to take the student deep into his world and a deadly partnership is born.

But while in pursuit of their ultimate mark, deceptions threaten to surface and those hired to fix problems become problems themselves.

Visit [www.themechanicmovie.com](http://www.themechanicmovie.com)



### BLACK SWAN FROM JAN 21

Nina played by Natalie Portman is a ballerina in a New York City company whose life isдане.

She lives with her retired ballerina mother Erica – Barbara Hershey – who is a driving force behind her daughter's professional ambition.

Dance director Thomas Leroy played by Vincent Cassel replaces prima ballerina Beth MacIntyre, Winona Ryder, for the opening production of their new season, Swan Lake and Nina is now his prima.

However, she has competition in the form of the new dancer, Lily, played by Mila Kunis, who impresses Leroy just as much.

The famous ballet requires the prima ballerina to play the White Swan with innocence and grace, and the Black with guile and sensuality.

Nina fits the White Swan perfectly but Lily is the personification of the Black Swan.

As the two young dancers' lives become entwined their rivalry morphs into a twisted friendship thus the central question of the film asks will Nina survive as she explores her dark side with a recklessness that threatens to destroy her.

Visit [www.foxsearchlight.com/blackswan/](http://www.foxsearchlight.com/blackswan/)

### TANGLED FROM JAN 28

Tangled is Disney's retelling of the Rapunzel fairytale.

Princess Rapunzel who is voiced by Mandy Moore is a teenager with 70 feet of enchanted blonde hair who has been imprisoned in a tower by the witch Gothel who is given life by Donna Murphy.

As you can imagine homesick Rapunzel wants to head back to the kingdom of her childhood.

So when lovable rogue Flynn voiced by Zachary Levi takes refuge in the tower as well, she spies an opportunity.

She makes a pact with the thief and the pair become entangled in an adventure.

With her pet chameleon and a police-horse by her side, Rapunzel heads for home.

As you will no doubt expect this Disney animation comes with catchy songs, comic characters, plenty of action and of course loads of hair. It will be released in two and three D versions

Danny Farragher

See local cinemas for showings.

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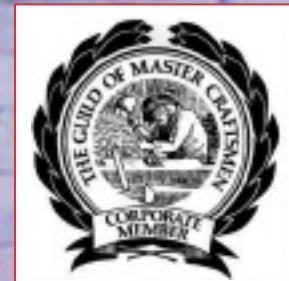
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# snappers claim to frame



Trees showing their greenery in Merrion's Wood.

This week we have pictures from two enthusiastic snappers with three of the shots coming from Lin Groves of Park Hall and one snap from a regular contributor Les Cockayne of Bloxwich.



This view along the Rushall canal taken from Five Ways Bridge looking towards Gillity Bridge.



A sunlit and rustic looking bench in the wood.

## Snaps of life in the borough

Are you a snazzy snapper, a lord of the lens or diva of the digital print? Think you can do better than these pictures, if you can why not share your snaps of the borough?

There is no limit on the age or the subject all we ask is that they be as sharp and clear as possible and must be of reasonable quality for publication and of course feature some area or aspect of Walsall and its life.

Send them in with your name, address and contact number and a brief description of what the picture shows.

Also we would like to hear about any interesting tales or stories attached to the photograph. Send them in either as a hard copy or electronically and we will do the rest. So get those cameras snapping, dig out those dusty old albums and send them to: Snappers Claim to Frame, Walsall Chronicle, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES or email them to walsallchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk.



These grasses and reeds were snapped by Les Cockayne during a morning walk.

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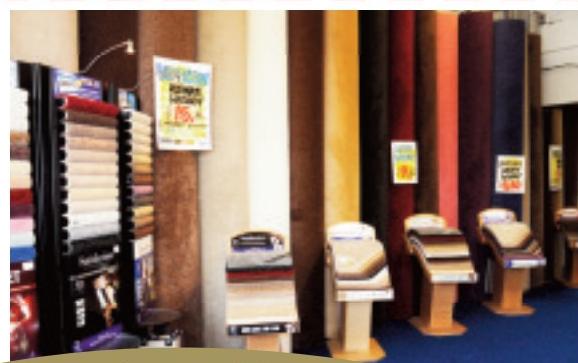


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# the pulse

## Multi-talented Elaine in concert as she turns another Paige



The Secret Sisters, Laura and Lydia Rogers – concert date

### Sisters in Symphony

A PAIR of young sisters reviving the sounds of classic 1940s and 50s country music will be the special guest of singer-songwriter Ray LaMontagne when he appears with his Pariah Dogs at Birmingham Symphony Hall on February 20.

The Sunday night concert will feature The Secret Sisters, Laura and Lydia Rogers of Alabama, who recently recorded their debut album in Nashville with legendary pro-

ducers T Bone Burnett and Dave Cobb.

Their self-titled album combines harmonies on a selection of broken-hearted laments, honky tonk toe-tappers and easy listening standards.

The duo recently reached a wider audience with their performance on Jools Holland's Hootenanny.

Tickets for LaMontagne's concert are priced at £22.50 and £25.

WARD-winning musical theatre star, multi-platinum recording artist and popular BBC Radio 2 presenter Elaine Paige, returns to the concert stage in 2011 including a performance at Birmingham Symphony Hall on March 7.

She has starred in numerous West End productions and on Broadway and in concert internationally, sweeping to fame with her performance as Eva Peron in Evita.

Shortly afterwards she created the role of Grizabella in the original production of Cats and the classic song Memory became one of the songs most closely associated with Elaine, pictured right.

Last November saw the release of her latest studio album, Elaine Paige & Friends.

Recorded in New York and produced by legendary record producer Phil Ramone for Rhino/Warner Bros Records, it features duets with 14 of her favourite musical performers.

#### Selection

These included, in alphabetical order: Paul Anka, John Barrowman, Michael Bolton, Kenny G, Barry Manilow, Johnny Mathis, Idina Menzel, Olivia Newton-John, Billy Ocean, Sinead O'Connor, LeAnn Rimes, Jon Secada, Neil Sedaka and Dionne Warwick.

The album entered the Top 20 in the UK and Elaine was awarded a gold disc for sales of more than 100,000 by the end of the year.

Her return to the concert stage with a new show will feature a selection of her favourite standards, her greatest hits and some of the modern classics from her new album.

Tickets are priced from £29.50 to £38.50 (with special packages including meeting the star after the show for £80) and are available from the box office on 0121 780 3333 or visit [www.thsh.co.uk](http://www.thsh.co.uk) online.



The King's Speech review – page 36

**YOUR EIGHT-PAGE ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE AND WEEK'S TV VIEWING**



Theatre round-up – page 31



DVD review – page 36

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# the pulse

# Audience to revel in Chess masterpiece

**T**HREE'S more to Craig Revel Horwood than judging dancers on Strictly Come Dancing.

The director has won acclaim for his flamboyant touring revival of 80s West End musical Chess, a collaboration between Tim Rice and Abba's Bjorn Ulvaeus and Benny Andersson.

The show, featuring former Wicked performer Shona White, was a hit in Wolverhampton last year and returns to the West Midlands for a run at Birmingham Hippodrome from February 7 to 12.

The show, about the duel between rival Russian and American chess grandmasters, features such songs as One Night In Bangkok, Pitiful Child and the classic I Know Him So Well.

Tickets are priced from £13.50 to £37.50, available online at [www.birminghamhippodrome.com](http://www.birminghamhippodrome.com) or by calling 0844 338 5000.



Shona White takes centre stage in Craig Revel Horwood's revival of Chess, which is returning to the West Midlands with a run at Birmingham Hippodrome

## Cantankerous Tom will soften your heart

WARTIME weepy Goodnight Mister Tom is being brought to the stage at Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre next month.

The play is an adaptation of Michelle Magorian's hugely popular children's novel about how a young London evacuee with a sad secret forges a friendship with his cantankerous old host, the titular Mister Tom, in a rural community.

Playing Mister Tom, a role associated with the late John Thaw from a popular TV film version, is Royal Shakespeare

## From Cornish shanties to Definite Diva songs

COMPANY actor Oliver Ford Davies, who will be familiar to fans of the blockbuster Star Wars movies as Sio Bibble in The Phantom Menace, Attack of the Clones and Revenge of the Sith.

Goodnight Mister Tom is staged at the Grand nightly from February 8 to 12 with matinees on the Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday.

Tickets are priced from £6.50 to £22.50. Contact the box office on 01902 429212 or at [www.grandtheatre.co.uk](http://www.grandtheatre.co.uk)

CORNISH harmonies as smooth as clotted cream will be heard at Birmingham Town Hall on Tuesday, January 25, when Port Isaac's Fisherman's Friends will be in concert with songs and sea shanties from the North Cornwall fishing village Hall, £9.50-£35.

Other forthcoming musical highlights in the city include on Thursday, January 27, a lunchtime recital by Ji Liu, winner of the Brant Piano Competition, performing Bach's Goldberg Variations (Town Hall, £17.50); on the same day, just over an hour later at 2.15pm, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra bring spring to the city early with a performance of Beethoven and Schumann's Spring Symphonies (Symphony Hall, £9.50-£35).

On January 28, the CBSO present showbiz and pop favourites at the half with Definitive Divas - Mary Carewe, Grainne Renihan and Emer McParland. Tickets cost £9.50 to £39.50. Call 0121 780 3333 or visit [www.thsh.co.uk](http://www.thsh.co.uk)

## COMPETITION



## Music memories are just the ticket

DIRECT from the USA and celebrating 50 years of number one Motown hits, the Magic of Motown tribute concert show is heading for Wolverhampton. It is due to book into the Grand Theatre on Saturday, February 5 and the Chronicles have teamed up with the promoters to offer eight readers the chance to win free tickets and extras. The prize will consist of a pair of tickets, DVD, CD and programme for the 5pm performance. The ticket price is £19.50 and there is a later performance at 8pm (£21.50).

The record label that brought the likes of the Temptations, Diana Ross and the Supremes, the Four Tops, Stevie Wonder, the Jackson 5, Marvin Gaye, Lionel Richie, Martha Reeves, Smokey Robinson, Mary Wells and the Isley Brothers to the world enjoyed its first number one hit in 1961. Please Mr Postman by the Marvelettes was followed by a phenomenal 56 other Billboard chart toppers.

To enter answer this simple question:

In which American city was the Motown label based?

Send your answer on a postcard with your name, address and daytime phone number to: Motown Competition, Chronicles (Editorial), 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES. Closing date: January 27.

Usual rules apply. Editor's decision is final. There is no cash alternative. To buy tickets contact the box office: 01902 429212 <http://www.grandtheatre.info>



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**Feb 5th DOUBLE BILL Amy Winehouse & Lady Gaga by Nicola Marie**  
(free entry, strictly by ticket invite only see bar staff)

**Feb 19th Beyond Bubble James Williams as seen on the X Factor**

**March 12th George Michael Wayne Dilks as seen on Stars in Their Eyes**

**March 26th Robbie Williams Tony Lewis as seen on BBC1**

**April 9th Elvis Kevin Paul as seen on GMTV 'Search for Elvis'**

**April 23rd That's Life Take That Tribute**

**COMPETITION NIGHTS MONDAY - WII/PLAYSTATION THURSDAY - DARTS CASH PRIZES**



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## Saturday TV

choice



## THE MAGICIANS

(BBC1, 7pm).  
Ingleby's British Got Talent has until this week been one of the most disappointing entries. Against the soaring heights of a specialist crew like the Phenomenal Studio, each might as well perform with a different celebrity partner, each week it fails to live up to the promise presented. In addition to the disastrous attempts at the more serious pieces, there are lots of glib, showy, ropey-sounding solos as the challenge of this contest. The programme will be pushed to the limit beyond their comfortable and appealing to be it every single piano or sleigh-bell hand and trills, as the tournament will then be really challenging as it was designed to test both the 'competition' - or, equally interestingly, an individual.

**1648** Breakfast, **1648** Saturday Kitchen Live, **1648** Editing Made Easy (P), **1648** BBC News Regional News, Weather 1649P Potted Poem, **1648** Australian Open Tennis, **1648** Live Soccer The men's singles competition at the World Indoor Championships will find **Score**, **1648** BBC News Regional News, Weather 1649P Hob in the Wall With John Penridge, Sam Remond, Kate Lester and Jonathan Ainsley (P).

**4.4.4 All Stars Total Football**  
An advance piece during  
featuring Richard  
Hannan and Amanda  
Brown.

**2.0.1 The Big Interview**, with  
P.J. O'Brien, Martin Kemp  
and Neil Morris.

**4.4.9 The National Lottery is  
One Way Out**, Club chipping  
involving youth  
employment issues.

**4.4.8 Giveaway**, Poch's reaction  
to the big lottery win.

**5.0.9 Green Fly with Mr. Tug**  
Blimpie banjoing into  
Harry Potter and the Prison  
of Azkaban, and Greek British  
All-conquering  
employees forced to  
deal with passengers  
from the lower classes.  
(TV)

**B.4 BBC News Scotland**

**6.0.2 Break with the Day**  
Including highlights of  
Manchester United v  
Birmingham City  
National Lottery Update.

**4.0.2 The Poshell Lounge**  
Steve McLean's Sunday  
presented highlights of  
rugby games.  
Wednesday.

**2006** CB Radio, 2006 CB300  
**2007** Movie: Six Weeks, P.  
**2008** Film: The Musketeer  
[2009] Sand building adventure  
starring Jason Chambers and  
Hilary Duff, *The Rock* (2009) Disney  
comedy, starring Bruce Willis  
and Ray Liotta, Escape from  
the Country (P) with The Bee  
Family and Mike P.

**1000** *Bed of Roses*: The plotless classic has been remade (1995).

**1010** *The Return of Mac*: Mac Davis' country featuring a country spin-off of the comedy (1995).

**1020** *Mr. & Mrs. Smith*: Tel Aviv, John Goodman, Johnny Vegas.

**1030** *The Weather*: New comedy from Roger Daltrey. Howard Da Silva, Henry Winkler, but the budget's small, so expect poor dialogue and the presence of touched-up computer "graphics."

**1040** *House Arrest*: Here we go! After breaking up with Eddie, Jamie tries to reconnected with her family but she reaches the end of her tether when her ex-lover, even though she has out of drugs.

**1050** *Runaway Lovers*: Featuring Austin Edwards, Humphrey Ker and Jack Palance (1995).

**1060** *Beavis*.

**1070** *Plan the Big Hatch* (1999): Diane, Sharon, Courtney, Cleopatra, etc.

**ABC** *Rebelde* (Prod. from Mexico) (R)  
**CBS** *Smash Mouth* (Prod. by David Lee Roth)  
**CNN** Harry Belafonte's *Belafonte*  
 T. V. Show, classic clips from previous series  
**CBS** *Picture This!* Connor and Abby choose a corporate identity for their art.  
**CBS** *The CBS One*, Amanda and company, a coal strike, an oil collector and a stock market drop to increase 50 single-camera and 10 repeat episodes per month. Party blocks and picnics.  
**CBS** *Macmillan*, Melinda Gates during a trip to the Galapagos, Marisa Tomei in a pre-taped job interview, a superstitious psychic, grille, Connie Corcoran with Steve Pendleton. (R)  
**WB** *TV Movie* (Prod. by David Lee Roth)  
**WB** *TV Movie* (Prod. by David Lee Roth)  
 Wright, George Acid, Anderson comedy, casting Steve Carell, Catherine Heiter and Paul Rudd.

**MTV** *The Zone*; *JTV* Headlines and *After the Game* (Prod. by David Lee Roth); *MTV Nightshift*. (see TV Channels)

**Channel 4**

9.00 The Hobo (R) 10.00 The Hobo (R) 10.30 Peacocks (R)  
11.00 and 11.30 Asleep (R) 11.30  
The Morning Line 11.45  
Horizon (R) 12.00 To The City  
Hot List (Music) 12.30, 13.00  
The Album Chart 13.00  
Introduction Double City News  
13.30 To The City (R) 13.30  
Horizon (R) 14.00 To The

**Channel 5**  
**1000-1100** **Wednesday-Friday**  
Recess Squad (9) **W**  
Jacobs/Pinck The True Story  
**1100-1200** **Saturday**  
Counts of the Big Household (79) **state change**  
Bliss, (7) **1000** **Moms Like Us**  
Run (1990) **1000** **Get Film, obtain**  
Mobile York (2001) **1000** **Mobile York, don't give up**  
**1100-1200** **Saturday**  
Haven, **1100** **True Story**  
Fine McG. (1991) **1100** **Crime File**  
Joining John Wayne, **1100**  
Elmer, **1100** **Death Masters**  
Dawson and Dasch-Hausler

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the pulse

# Sunday TV

## Choice

## BBC1

## BBC

## ITV1

## Channel 4

## Channel 5

## Digital



### LARK RISE TO CANDLEFORD (BBC1, 8pm)

There is a lot more to him than his love of reading (or indeed the church), but the author can't imagine anyone else in the role. Bill and Peaches (Daisy) are nice, but they just don't have the charm or depth of Lark Rise, and only Charlotte can match his presence. Remarried, Father Thomas turned his back on his wife, but he quickly realises she's of help after his accident. Thomas' concern that Religious leaders rule in planning the funeral and the open graves while all the local townspeople are weighed down by grief along.

**10.45** **Brookside**, 20th Anniversary of the Day (ITV, 8.45pm) The Review Man Show **10.55** The Big Breakfast, West County Trots, **11am** The Police Show **11.15pm** Bargain Hunt, **11.30pm** Escape to the Country **11.45pm** EastEnders, **11.55pm** My Family **12.15pm** Songs of Praise, **12.30pm** BBC News Regional News Weather.

**11.30pm** **Audrey & Eddie**, Finn Barre and Eddie have a little time off, **11.45pm** Aunty & Grandpa, Maria (ITV)

**11.45pm** **Coverdale**, **11.55pm** The Quirky Kid, **11.55pm** Coronation Street, **12.15am** Lark Rise to Candleford, Thomas becomes concerned about his son's new interests, **12.30am**

**12.30am** **Emily Woodhouse**, **12.45am** The annual expert debate on climate change through the decades, beginning in the forest, which is home to a diverse population of animals and plants (ITV)

**1.15am** **The Private Side of Life**, **1.30am** Blue Antiques, take a historical look at the history of TV, highlighting what can go wrong when the programme goes bad, leaving a social distance (ITV)

**1.45am** **Big Brew Project**, **1.55am** **Blue Antiques**, **2.15am** **Emily & Stevey**, Emily works about caring, **2.30am** **Emily & Stevey - Part 2**, **2.45am** **Emily & Stevey - Part 3**, **2.55am** **FBI: St. Louis** (1994), **3.15am** **Family**, **3.30am** **Doc**, **3.45am** **Shots** (2007), **4.05am** **Coronation Street**, **4.15am** **Police**, **4.30am** **EastEnders**, **4.45am** **Family**, **4.55am** **Family**, **5.10am** **Family**, **5.20am** **Family**, **5.30am** **Family**, **5.45am** **Family**, **5.55am** **Family**, **6.10am** **Family**, **6.20am** **Family**, **6.30am** **Family**, **6.45am** **Family**, **6.55am** **Family**, **7.10am** **Family**, **7.20am** **Family**, **7.30am** **Family**, **7.45am** **Family**, **7.55am** **Family**, **8.10am** **Family**, **8.20am** **Family**, **8.30am** **Family**, **8.45am** **Family**, **8.55am** **Family**, **9.10am** **Family**, **9.20am** **Family**, **9.30am** **Family**, **9.45am** **Family**, 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Colin Firth is outstanding as the star of The King's Speech



Colin Firth delivers the performance of his life

# Tears and laughter in Colin's crowning glory

## THE KING'S SPEECH (12A)

The British are coming!" famously declared screenwriter Colin Welland in 1982 when he collected his Oscar for Chariots Of Fire.

Nearly 30 years later, his prophecy seems to be coming true.

Slumdog Millionaire was the toast of Tinseltown in 2008, garnering almost every trophy in sight, and now The King's Speech is poised to do the same, and win Colin Firth a well-deserved Academy Award into the bargain.

Last year, the British actor was cruelly denied a golden statuette for his revelatory performance as a suicidal gay lecturer in Tom Ford's directorial debut, A Single Man.

This year, he should definitely practise his self-deprecating acceptance speech for this heartrending portrayal of King George VI in Tom Hooper's majestic comedy drama. On Sunday he picked up the Golden Globe for best actor in the awards given by Hollywood Foreign Press Association, which are seen as a good indicator for the Oscars.

Firth is matched laugh for laugh by Geof-

## Cinema

frey Rush in imperious form, and the cream of homegrown acting talent provides illustrious support, including Timothy Spall as Winston Churchill.

The King's Speech is an impeccably crafted chapter from recent British history that charts a remarkable and unlikely friendship between two men from opposite sides of the class divide.

When King George V (Gambon) dies in 1936, eldest son Edward (Pearce) ascends to the throne, but his reign is shrouded in scandal as he continues to romance American divorcee, Wallis Simpson (Best).

Love triumphs over duty and Edward abdicates, forcing youngest son Albert (Firth) into the spotlight.

However, the newly crowned King George VI suffers from a crippling stammer, which renders him unable to deliver public addresses.

With war imminent and the country looking to its King for leadership, Queen Elizabeth (Helena Bonham Carter) approaches unconventional Australian-born speech therapist Lionel Logue (Rush) on the recommendation of a friend.

"She said your antipodean methods were

both unconventional and controversial. Those are two of my favourite words," smiles Elizabeth, persuading Lionel to help her husband overcome his fears.

The King's Speech is a crowd-pleasing, heart-tugging gem, seen through the eyes of a man who is frightened to say a word for fear of what might – or might not – come out.

David Seidler's script elegantly dissects the relationship between monarch and commoner creating memorable exchanges that provide the film with huge laughs and a strong emotional heartbeat.

Firth delivers the performance of his life, battling valiantly against his condition, while Rush is hysterical as the linguist who refuses any concessions to his king.

"My castle, my rules," he maintains.

"Their double-act is glorious, including an unforgettable barrage of expletives in the name of therapy.

"Do you know the f word?" asks Lionel. "F...f... fornication?" replies Albert nervously.

The finale is guaranteed to have audiences cheering and sobbing with joy.

If The King's Speech is a sign of things to come in 2011 then it will be a very, very happy new year.

## DVD

# Old Celtic magic brings horror into 21st century

## OUTCAST – CERT 18

**O**utcast is a wannabe horror film which draws on ancient Celtic tradition and is set among the modern landscape of a bleak high rise estate somewhere in Edinburgh.

The plot centres around a mysterious mother and son who move into one of the flats and are on the run from a deadly pursuer Cathal, played by a bearded James Nesbitt.

Using an ancient form of magic to keep themselves hidden from their hunter, Irish travellers Mary, played by Kate Dickie and her teenage son, Fergal – Niall Bruton, wind up in the dingy flat.

It seems their only neighbour is a family which includes the streetwise and pretty Petronella, a Scottish/Romany girl played by Hanna Stanbridge who befriends Fergal and finds him an oasis in



the tangle of her life coping with her retarded brother and alcoholic mother.

Mary is extremely protective of her son and for good reason, for they hide a secret which when unleashed leaves a trail of dead bodies. She is dedicated to keeping her son out of the clutches of Cathal but now has the added complication of keeping him away from any romantic entanglement with Petronella.

Cathal using his own style of dark magic to hunt his quarry creating panic for Mary and her son as she discovers he is closing in.

## Problems

Using her own blood and protective symbols around their new home Mary uses all her witch-like powers to keep prying eyes away and to avoid the inevitable showdown with their Van Helsing-style hunter.

One of the problems with this film is it never seems sure of what it is, it's not gory enough and takes itself too seriously to be a slasher movie.

It isn't really scary enough to be a full-blown horror film and doesn't really have enough special effects to be a sci-fi movie.

There are, as you can imagine, the set pieces of the minor characters wondering around the dark concrete landscape just

waiting to be attacked.

You have to give it to director Colm McCarthy he does create a menacing arena with his shots of the bleak urban surroundings in which the characters dwell. However, Nesbitt is never fully convincing as the brooding hunter protected by the ancient symbols tattooed into his flesh as he goes on his quest.

He even comes over as a little incompetent as the one thing he is told about leaving a trail he forgets almost immediately.

Outcast doesn't really have the jump factor as a horror film and never really builds the tension high enough to keep you on the edge of your seat.

**Outcast out on DVD January 17**

Danny Farragher



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# Home of Property

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The top property guide for Walsall, Brownhills, Aldridge, Willenhall and Bloxwich

## Five-bed home has plenty of character

Hunters estate agent in Sutton Coldfield is managing the sale of this delightful period house located at 71 Borneo Street in Walsall and is inviting offers in the region of £285,000.

Approach to the house is via a driveway with off-road parking and steps leading to the entrance with further access to the hall.

Here there is a tiled floor, ceiling arch, radiator and door into a further inner hall where stairs lead to the first floor.

The hallway includes a shower room with WC, wash basin, shower cubicle, storage cupboard and double-glazed window.

With dimensions of 14ft 7in x 15ft, the lounge features a real fuel fireplace, coving and ceiling rose while the sitting room has two sash windows, fireplace with coal-effect gas fire, radiator, coving and ceiling rose.

Accessed via the lobby, the kitchen and dining area measures 23ft 10in x 9ft 9in and includes a range of cupboards, granite work-surface, sink unit, double oven and grill, microwave, five-ring gas hob with extractor

hood, dishwasher and radiator. There is also space for a table, double-glazed windows to the side, access to a utility and double doors opening to the garden.

Plumbing for a washing machine is provided in the utility where there are further worksurfaces, a sink unit and housing for the gas central heating boiler.

Once upstairs, a further set of steps lead to the second floor where there is a bedroom with sloping roof, linen cupboard and WC.

### Obscure

The first floor landing has four further bedrooms with double-glazed windows and bathroom comprising a modern suite with WC, wash basin, bath with shower and obscure double-glazed window. Outside, the grounds of the residence include a garage which measures 16ft 11in x 18ft 3in and a garden room with heating and water tap.

The vendor advises that further planning permission has also been granted for the site. The rear garden is one of the main features of the residence with a block-paved patio, lawn and mature shrubs and trees.

For further information visit the website at [www.huntersgroup.co.uk](http://www.huntersgroup.co.uk) or call 0121 355 0555 to arrange a viewing.



This period home has five bedrooms split over two floors, a fuel-burning fireplace and stylish fittings.



There is a range of high quality units and integrated appliances in the kitchen

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**WEDNESBURY  
COLLINS ROAD**  
This traditional-style three bedroom semi detached home occupies a generous corner plot and provides extremely well presented accommodation with potential for future extension (subject to Local Authority planning permission). £144,950



**WEDNESBURY  
PEMBERTON CRESCENT**  
With double glazing and combination heating throughout this three bedroom detached property is offered for sale with no upward chain and is competitively priced for a quick sale. £132,500



**WEDNESBURY  
RYDERS CHAMBERS, SPRING HEAD**  
Freehold building for sale. Available Freehold. Centrally located to Town Centre and parking. Four ground floor rooms, three of good proportion. Two first floor rooms: Ground and first floor w/c's. Combination central heating. Vacant possession. Suitable a variety of uses. £79,950



**DARLASTON  
WAVERLEY ROAD**  
Situated in a popular road, close to the amenities of Darlaston town centre, this spacious traditional-style mid terrace property has central heating and double glazing and offers potential for further improvement. £89,950



**MOXLEY, WEDNESBURY  
HUGHES ROAD**  
This large three bedroom semi detached property benefits from two reception rooms, Economy 7 heating and double glazing, a large kitchen, a garage and if offered for sale with no upward chain. £92,250



**WEDNESBURY  
ST. PETER CROFT**  
Situated in a quiet cul de sac on a larger than average plot, this modern-style semi detached home offers accommodation of generous proportions and is covered by the remainder of the builders NHBC guarantee. £139,950



**WEDNESBURY  
WINDMILL STREET**  
★ Superbly presented mid terraced house.  
★ Two bedrooms  
★ Contemporary kitchen and bathroom  
★ En-suite shower room  
★ Enclosed rear garden  
★ Semi-detached  
★ Ideal first time buyers  
★ Recently fitted kitchen  
★ Viewings via Wednesbury office  
£104,950



**WEDNESBURY  
DARBY ROAD**  
★ Semi detached house  
★ Ideal first time purchase  
★ Two bedrooms  
★ Recently fitted kitchen  
★ Re-fitted first floor bathroom  
★ Private enclosed rear garden  
★ Off road parking to the fore  
★ Viewings via Wednesbury office  
£117,500



**Darlaston**  
**Cash Joynson Avenue**  
Situated in Darlaston, convenient for schools, bus routes and shopping facilities, this three bedroom end terrace house is ideal for first time buyers or investment purposes. The property benefits from double glazing, central heating and has a conservatory. £75,000



**WEDNESBURY  
HOLDEN ROAD**  
★ Very large semi detached property  
★ Situated in popular location  
★ Three double bedrooms  
★ Two reception rooms  
★ Lovely large garden  
★ Large garage to the fore.  
★ Viewings via Wednesbury office  
£134,950 reduced for quick sale



**WEST BROMWICH  
17 LEACROFT GROVE**  
Enjoying a private aspect to the rear garden and boasting generous bedrooms, this property is offered for sale with no upward chain. Thought ideal for a quick sale - MUST BE VIEWED  
£120,000



**WEDNESBURY  
HOLLY ROAD**  
This traditional style two bedroom semi detached property is situated in a popular cul de sac off Wednesbury North and is offered for sale with no upward chain. £124,000  
young professionals, being ideally located for access to the motorway network at Junction 9 of M6. The accommodation benefits from majority central heating and double glazing.

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**WEDNESBURY  
CRANHILL LANE**  
This semi detached property in an established location in Wednesbury comprises; three well proportioned bedrooms, verandah, lounge and breakfast kitchen the property is considered ideal for first time buyers. £99,950



**Darlaston**  
**Broadwaters Road**  
A very well presented TWO BEDROOMED SEMI-DETACHED residence on a larger than average plot offering potential for further development subject to planning consents. The property is considered ideal for a first time buyer and very accessible. £94,950  
To the centre of Darlaston, Willenhall and Wednesbury, with the Motorway network nearby for commuting to Birmingham. The property is well served by local amenities including schools for children of all ages.



**WEDNESBURY  
VICARAGE ROAD**  
Situated in a very popular road, close to Wednesbury town centre, this well appointed traditional-style mid terraced property must be viewed internally to be fully appreciated. Being competitively priced for a quick sale, the accommodation includes two reception rooms, two bedrooms plus attic room - fantastic value. £294,950



**Moxley**  
**Curin Drive**  
Situated in the Moxley area of Wednesbury, convenient for the Black Country Route, this mid terrace property offers great potential for further development subject to planning consents. The property is recommended for a quick sale and offers double glazing and no chain, viewing via the agent is recommended of the £90,000  
accommodation which briefly comprises: Reception Hall, Lounge, Kitchen, Dining Room, Conservatory side entrance, Utility Room, Cloakroom, Refitted Bathrooms, private enclosed rear garden and off road parking to the fore.



**Darlaston**  
**Heathfield Lane West**  
Having the benefit of central heating and double glazing, this traditional semi would be ideal for a family who want to grow. Within the catchment area of local schools and close to Darlaston town centre and transport links to Wolverhampton. £89,950



**DARLASTON  
FORGE ROAD**  
This semi detached house is in an established location of Darlaston is close to local amenities and schools. With two good size bedrooms and two reception rooms the property is ideal for a first time buyer or for investment purposes. £89,950



**DARLASTON  
RICHARDS STREET**  
★ Traditional mid terrace house heated  
★ Three bedroom  
★ Two reception rooms  
★ Double glazed and centrally  
★ Rear garden  
★ Vacant possession  
★ Viewings via Wednesbury office  
£79,950



**DARLASTON  
HALL STREET**  
THIS MODERN TWO BEDROOM GROUND FLOOR APARTMENT IS OFFERED FOR SALE WITH NO UPWARD CHAIN, WITH ECONOMY 7 ELECTRIC HEATING AND DOUBLE GLAZING THE PROPERTY IS CLOSE TO ALL AMENITIES AND INCLUDES PRIVATE PARKING TO THE REAR. £67,500

**WANTED**

Mrs G wants a three bedroom semi in New Invention, Short Heath or Summer Hayes. She has sold and can pay up to £135,000. Ref: RB

**NEW**SUMMER HAYES, WILLENHALL  
BUTE CLOSE

- \* A well maintained extended bungalow style semi detached property
- \* Three bedrooms
- \* Gas central heating
- \* £142,500 OFFERS, VIEWING ESSENTIAL

**WANTED**

Mrs B is looking for a three bedroom property in the County Bridge area, she can proceed straight away.

Price guide up to £120,000. Ref: NW

**NEW**REEDSWOOD  
ROCHESTER CROFT

- \* Spacious semi-detached houses between semi & town house
- \* Extended kitchen inc. oven, hob and refrigerator
- \* Double glazed windows
- \* Large lounge and dining room
- \* Garage and off road parking
- \* Fitted kitchen
- \* Cull-de-sac position
- \* Double glazed conservatory
- \* Gas central heating
- \* Double glazing
- \* Garage with ample parking & double garage
- \* Generous rear garden with timber decked patio
- \* Having double glazing essential

**WANTED**

Mr & Mrs B urgently require a four bedroom detached property in Essington. They have sold their own property. Price guide up to £275,000. Ref: NW

WILLENHALL  
NOOSE LANE

- \* Three bedroom end town house style property
- \* Gas central heating
- \* UPVC double glazed windows
- \* Rear garage

£79,950 No Chain

**WANTED**

Miss K is looking for a three bedroom property in the Summer Hayes/Pool Hayes area. Price guide up to £160,000. She has sold her own property. Ref: EJ

**NEW**SHORT HEATH  
WOODSIDE WAY

- \* Semi-detached bungalow in popular woodland development
- \* Two bedrooms
- \* Gas central heating
- \* UPVC double glazed windows
- \* Large front lounge

£124,950 OFFERS

**WANTED**

Miss S urgently wants a three or four bedroom detached in Coppice Farm. She has no chain and can proceed immediately. Price guide up to £200,000. Ref: NW

**NEW**WILLENHALL  
HILL ROAD

- \* Traditional style end town house
- \* Three bedrooms
- \* UPVC double glazed windows
- \* Gas central heating
- \* Large rear garden
- \* Block paved driveway
- \* Upstairs shower room

£104,995 OFFERS

**WANTED**

Mr W wants an investment property in need of modernisation. Price guide £50,000-£90,000. He is able to complete quickly. Ref: NW

**NEW**WILLENHALL  
VAUGHAN ROAD

- \* Much improved town house style property
- \* Two bedrooms
- \* Super sycamore double glazed conservatory
- \* Viewing essential

£109,950

**WANTED**

Mr H & Miss W are looking for a two or three bedroom property near to Pool Hayes school, they have nothing to sell. Price guide maximum £110,000. Ref: BJ

**NEW**NEW INVENTION, WILLENHALL  
SANDRINGTON AVENUE

- \* Traditional extended freehold semi
- \* Popular location of Littlehead Road
- \* Two reception rooms
- \* Gas central heating
- \* UPVC double glazed windows
- \* Large rear garden
- \* Block paved driveway
- \* Extended lounge and kitchen

£129,950 OFFERS

**WANTED**

Miss G is looking for a three bedroom property in the Short Heath area, she is a first time buyer with a price guide up to £100,000. Ref: BJ

WILLENHALL  
ALVINGTON CLOSE, OFF STROUD AVENUE

- \* Well presented semi-detached property in popular location
- \* Three bedrooms
- \* Gas central heating, UPVC double glazed windows
- \* Pleasant rear garden

£126,500 Viewing Recommended

**NEW**WILLENHALL  
PINSON ROAD

- \* Pleasantly appointed semi in convenient location
- \* Three bedrooms
- \* Two reception rooms
- \* Gas central heating, UPVC DG windows
- \* Pleasant rear garden

£99,950 Internal Viewing Recommended

**NEW**WILLENHALL  
LONGWOOD RISE

- \* Semi-detached property in general corner plot
- \* Popular location of Stow Avenue
- \* Three bedrooms
- \* Two reception rooms
- \* Gas central heating, UPVC double glazed windows
- \* Pleasant gardens to front and rear

£139,995 OFFERS - Viewing Recommended

**NEW**SHORT HEATH  
COLTHAM ROAD

- \* Cleaned exterior style improved property
- \* Comprehensive refitted to a high standard
- \* Three bedrooms including left return
- \* Two reception rooms
- \* Gas central heating, UPVC double glazed windows
- \* Pleasant gardens to front and rear

£99,950 Internal Viewing Essential

**JAN SALE**BENTLEY, WALSALL  
WREXHAM AVENUE

- \* Traditional style bay fronted semi
- \* Three bedrooms
- \* Gas central heating
- \* UPVC double glazed windows
- \* Pleasant gardens
- \* No upward chain

WAS £84,950 NOW £79,995

WILLENHALL SUMMER SALE  
RAVENSBOROUGH GROVE

- \* Pleasantly appointed end town house style property
- \* Two bedrooms
- \* Gas central heating
- \* UPVC double glazing

WAS £97,500 NOW £94,995

**JAN SALE**SHORT HEATH, WILLENHALL  
COLTHAM ROAD

- \* Pleasantly appointed traditional style terraced property
- \* Popular Short Heath location
- \* Two bedrooms, one with wardrobes
- \* Upstairs bathroom with shower

WAS £89,950 NOW £84,995

**JAN SALE**SUMMER HAYES  
WOBURN AVENUE**JAN SALE**NEW INVENTION, WILLENHALL  
SANDLAND ROAD

- \* Spacious traditional style semi
- \* Three bedrooms
- \* Lounge and dining room
- \* Double glazing
- \* Cull-de-sac position
- \* Two bedrooms (potential to convert to three)
- \* Garage and off road parking

WAS £184,950 NOW £176,500

WILLENHALL  
CROXLEY GARDENS

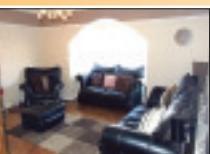
- \* Pleasantly appointed modern style semi in popular modern style semi in popular development
- \* Two bedrooms
- \* Gas central heating
- \* UPVC double glazing
- \* Garage and block paved driveway

WAS £119,995 NOW £117,995

**JAN SALE**WILLENHALL  
BIRCHFIELDS ROAD

- \* Detached bungalow in a desirable location off Penn Lane South
- \* Two bedrooms
- \* Gas central heating
- \* UPVC double glazed windows

WAS £174,950 NOW £173,500

**JAN SALE**WILLENHALL  
LINCOLN AVENUE**JAN SALE**BLOXWICH  
61 MARLBOROUGH STREET

- \* Top floor two bedroom flat
- \* Convenient to Bloxwich town centre
- \* Gas central heating system
- \* Majority UPVC double glazing
- \* Fitted kitchen inc. oven and hob
- \* Double glazing
- \* Large rear garden
- \* Security intercom system
- \* Upstairs bathroom with shower
- \* Bedrooms with shower

WAS £69,950 NOW £64,950

SHORT HEATH  
WOODSIDE WAY

- \* Pleasantly appointed semi in popular modern style semi
- \* Two bedrooms
- \* Gas central heating, UPVC double glazing
- \* Black paved driveway
- \* Fitted Kitchen inc. oven, hob and

WAS £129,995 NOW £124,995

**JAN SALE**NEW INVENTION, WILLENHALL  
LICHFIELD ROAD

- \* Detached extended detached bungalow
- \* Two bedrooms
- \* Two reception rooms
- \* Gas central heating
- \* Double glazed windows
- \* Popular location

WAS £210,000 NOW £199,950

**JAN SALE**NEW INVENTION  
LICHFIELD ROAD**JAN SALE**SHORT HEATH, WILLENHALL  
WALKERS FOLD

- \* Much improved modern detached bungalow and house
- \* Three bedrooms
- \* Extended kitchen and dining room
- \* Gas central heating
- \* Double glazed windows
- \* Cull-de-sac position
- \* Pleasant gardens
- \* Viewing essential

WAS £184,950 NOW £179,950

**JAN SALE**WILLENHALL  
ST ANNES ROAD

- \* Pleasantly appointed modern style semi
- \* Two bedrooms
- \* Gas central heating
- \* UPVC double glazing
- \* Large rear garden
- \* Lovely enclosed rear garden
- \* Block paved driveway

WAS £94,995 NOW £89,995

**www.Skint.net**

**Willenhall**  
**01902 631151**

**Wednesfield**  
**01902 732324**

**Tipton**  
**0121 520 2255**

**Wednesbury**  
**0121 505 1818**

**Bilston**  
**01902 353578**

**Sedgley**  
**01902 686868**

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the estate agent

Call Willenhall Branch on  
**01902 633323**  
or email: [willenhall@pauldubberley.co.uk](mailto:willenhall@pauldubberley.co.uk)

Walsall  
Wolverhampton Road, V NEW

## Awaiting Picture

\*\*\*BUILDING PLOT OPEN TO OFFERS\*\*\* A rare opportunity to purchase a plot of land in a cul-de-sac with planning permission for a luxurious 3 bedroom detached family home with its own separate detached homes either side with off road parking in front of the plots. To see plans and drawings contact the Willenhall office.

OFFERS AROUND: £59,995

Viewing: 01902 633323



Repaired, improved and updated. Three bedrooms semi-detached family home having the benefit of up-ward chain, UPVC double glazing, gas central heating. Used for a young family the property briefly comprises, porch, reception hall, fitted kitchen, 3 bedrooms, bathroom with shower, front and rear gardens with outside tap, one end of rear garden. MUST BE VIEWED. VIRTUAL TOUR ON OUR WEBSITE.

OFFERS AROUND: £79,995

Viewing: 01902 633323



A 3 bedroom end terrace family home benefiting from quiet cul-de-sac location, gas central heating & upvc double glazing. The well maintained property briefly comprises, reception hall, through lounge with feature fireplace, fitted kitchen, side covered entrance, three bedrooms, bathroom with shower room, block paved driveway, garage and enclosed rear garden.

OFFERS AROUND: £89,995

Viewing: 01902 633323



A well presented, extended and improved two bedroom semi-detached home on the popular Hadley Heath estate and having the benefit of no upward chain, UPVC double glazing and gas central heating. This splendid property briefly comprises, reception hall, lounge with feature fireplace, fitted kitchen, dining room, conservatory, 2 double bedrooms, en-suite shower room, front and rear gardens and off road parking.

OFFERS AROUND: £119,995

Viewing: 01902 633323



A good size detached two bedroom bungalow having the benefit of quiet cul-de-sac location, UPVC double glazing, gas central heating and no upward chain. The property briefly comprises, porch, reception hall, spacious lounge/diner, fitted kitchen, conservatory, 2 double bedrooms, en-suite shower room, front and rear gardens, garage and off road parking.

OFFERS AROUND: £150,000

Viewing: 01902 633323



\*\*\*OPEN TO OFFERS\*\*\* A three bedroom modern detached family home in a sought after location having the benefit of no upward chain, double glazing, gas central heating and no upward chain. At the rear of the property there is a large garden with a paved area and a 50% part exchange scheme for the garden. The property has a large living room, open plan kitchen/diner, 3 bedrooms, bathroom, front and rear gardens, off road parking and garden garage.

OFFERS AROUND: £65,000

Viewing: 01902 633323



The Property  
Ombudsman  
SALES

Willenhall  
Granville Street, Willenhall REDUCED



★★ INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY ★★ LAND FOR SALE  
★★ PLANNING PERMISSION FOR 4 X TWO BEDROOM APARTMENTS ★★ CLOSE TO WILLENHALL TOWN ★★

DON'T MISS OUT! PROPERTY MUST BE SOLD ★★

OFFERS AROUND: £89,995

Viewing: 01902 633323



• A 3 Bedroom End Terrace Home  
• Gas Central Heating  
• Double Glazing (where specified)

• Lounge

OFFERS AROUND: £84,995

Viewing: 0121 505 3533



An upgraded and refurbished three bedroom mid floor flat having the benefit of UPVC double glazing, gas central heating and no upward chain. This spacious property further comprises, reception hall, lounge with feature fireplace, 3 bedrooms (bedroom 3 currently used as dining room), re-fitted bathroom and communal gardens and parking. VIRTUAL TOUR ON OUR WEBSITE.

OFFERS AROUND: £81,995

Viewing: 01902 633323



A well maintained modern 2 bedroom semi-detached home having benefit of gas central heating, double glazing and no upward chain. Located in a cul-de-sac this splendid property briefly comprises, reception hall, lounge with feature fireplace, 2 bedrooms, bathroom, en-suite shower room, block paved driveway, garage and enclosed rear garden.

OFFERS AROUND: £127,995

Viewing: 01902 633323

Darlaston  
Station Street, Darlaston REDUCED



• A Period 2 Bedrom Mid Terrace Home  
• Well Positioned for both Walsall & Darlaston Town Centres

• Gas Central Heating & Double Glazing (where specified)

• Double Glazed (as specified)

• Off-Site Car Park Location

OFFERS IN EXCESS OF: £72,000

Viewing: 0121 505 3533



• Period 2 Bedroom (and a loft room) Semi Detached Home  
• Gas Central Heating & Double Glazing

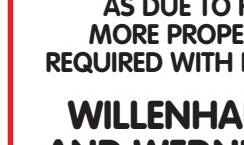
• Lounge with Feature Fireplace

• Dining Room

Viewing: 0121 505 3533



Offers Invited



A recently refurbished mid residence which benefits from cavity wall and loft insulation, UPVC double glazing, gas central heating and no upward chain. This good sized property briefly comprises, reception hall, lounge with feature fireplace, 2 bedrooms, bathroom, separate shower room, rear garden, off road parking and garage.

OFFERS AROUND: £84,950

Viewing: 0121 505 3533



• A Recently Refurbished Mid Residence  
• Gas Centrally Heated  
• Double Glazing (where specified)

• Off-Site Car Park Location

OFFERS AROUND: £84,950

Viewing: 0121 505 3533



A three bedroom mid terrace family home having the benefit of cavity wall and loft insulation, UPVC double glazing, gas central heating and no upward chain. This good sized property briefly comprises, reception hall, lounge with feature fireplace, 2 bedrooms, bathroom, separate shower room, rear garden, off road parking and garage.

OFFERS AROUND: £94,995

Viewing: 01902 633323



TEXT PD TO 84840  
OR pauldubberley.mobi ON YOUR PHONE BROWSER

Darlaston  
Allen Drive, Darlaston REDUCED



• A Recently Refurbished Mid Residence  
• Gas Centrally Heated

• Double Glazing (where specified)

• Off-Site Car Park Location

OFFERS AROUND: £84,950

Viewing: 0121 505 3533



• A Recently Refurbished Mid Residence  
• Gas Centrally Heated

• Double Glazing (where specified)

• Off-Site Car Park Location

OFFERS AROUND: £84,950

Viewing: 0121 505 3533



Offers Invited



A three bedroom mid terrace family home having the benefit of no upward chain, UPVC double glazing, gas central heating and no upward chain. This spacious property briefly comprises, reception hall, lounge with feature fireplace, 2 bedrooms, bathroom, separate shower room, rear garden, off road parking and garage.

OFFERS AROUND: £114,995

Viewing: 0121 505 3533



• A Recently Refurbished Mid Residence  
• Gas Centrally Heated

• Double Glazing (where specified)

• Off-Site Car Park Location

OFFERS AROUND: £114,995

Viewing: 0121 505 3533



A three bedroom mid terrace family home having the benefit of no upward chain, UPVC double glazing, gas central heating and no upward chain. This spacious property briefly comprises, reception hall, lounge with feature fireplace, 2 bedrooms, bathroom, separate shower room, rear garden, off road parking and garage.

OFFERS AROUND: £94,995

Viewing: 01902 633323



Wolverhampton  
Davenport Road, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton



A three bedroom mid terrace family home having the benefit of cavity wall and loft insulation, UPVC double glazing, gas central heating and no upward chain. This good sized property briefly comprises, reception hall, lounge with feature fireplace, 2 bedrooms, bathroom, separate shower room, rear garden, off road parking and garage.

OFFERS AROUND: £94,995

Viewing: 01902 633323



• A Three Bedroom Mid Terrace Family Home  
• Loft Insulation

• Double Glazing

• Off-Site Car Park Location

OFFERS AROUND: £94,995

Viewing: 01902 633323



• A Three Bedroom Mid Terrace Family Home  
• Loft Insulation

• Double Glazing

• Off-Site Car Park Location

OFFERS AROUND: £94,995

Viewing: 01902 633323



• A Three Bedroom Mid Terrace Family Home  
• Loft Insulation

• Double Glazing

• Off-Site Car Park Location

OFFERS AROUND: £94,995

Viewing: 01902 633323



• A Three Bedroom Mid Terrace Family Home  
• Loft Insulation

• Double Glazing

• Off-Site Car Park Location

OFFERS AROUND: £94,995

Viewing: 01902 633323



Willenhall  
Tyler Road, Willenhall



A well maintained three bedroom end terrace family home benefiting from recently fitted carpets, fitted kitchen, double glazing and gas central heating. Located close to the Black Country Route and the M6, the property briefly comprises, reception hall, lounge with feature fireplace, dining room, kitchen, 3 bedrooms, bathroom, separate shower room, rear garden, off road parking and garage.

OFFERS AROUND: £96,000

Viewing: 01902 633323



• A Three Bedroom End Terrace Family Home  
• Loft Insulation

• Double Glazing

• Off-Site Car Park Location

OFFERS AROUND: £96,000

Viewing: 01902 633323



• A Three Bedroom End Terrace Family Home  
• Loft Insulation

• Double Glazing

• Off-Site Car Park Location

OFFERS AROUND: £96,000

Viewing: 01902 633323



• A Three Bedroom End Terrace Family Home  
• Loft Insulation

• Double Glazing

• Off-Site Car Park Location

OFFERS AROUND: £96,000

Viewing: 01902 633323



• A Three Bedroom End Terrace Family Home  
• Loft Insulation

• Double Glazing

• Off-Site Car Park Location

OFFERS AROUND: £96,000

Viewing: 01902 633323



Willenhall  
Bure Grove, Willenhall REDUCED



VIRTUAL TOURS

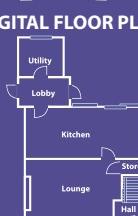


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DIGITAL FLOOR PLANS





# Estate Agents & Letting Agents

## Chartered Surveyors

### RICS HomeBuyer Service



BANKS STREET, WILLENHALL

- Detached three/four bedroomed period property
- Modernised but retaining many original features
- Gas central heating and extensive double glazing

OFFERS £250,000



NIGHTINGALE CRESCENT, COPPICE FARM

- Spacious through lounge
- Dining room and large fitted kitchen
- Side garage and driveway
- Large enclosed stepped rear garden
- FOUR BEDROOMED DETACHED
- EN SUITE OFF MASTER BEDROOM
- FITTED KITCHEN & UTILITY

OFFERS £219,950

- GROUND FLOOR W.C.
- GARAGE CONVERTED TO OFFICE/STOREROOM
- OFF ROAD PARKING



FURZEBANK WAY, WILLENHALL

- Three bedoomed Semi Detached on Corner Plot
- Popular Estate for Families
- UPVC Double Glazed and Gas Central Heated
- Fitted Kitchen and Lounge
- Detached Garage
- Bathroom
- Enclosed Rear Garden

OFFERS £134,950

**Happy Birthday!**  
**FRASER WOOD**  
**WILLENHALL**

To celebrate the  
**10th ANNIVERSARY**  
of the  
opening of our branch at  
**LANE HEAD, WILLENHALL**, Fraser Wood are offering a  
**25% DISCOUNT**  
on all new instructions during the month of February  
(subject to Sole Agency and normal terms & conditions)

Join us now to arrange your  
**FREE MARKET APPRAISAL**  
and take advantage of this special offer



POOLE'S LANE, WILLENHALL

- Four bedoomed detached
- Refurbished and extended
- Two reception rooms
- Conservatory
- Fitted kitchen
- En-suite

OFFERS £235,000



BLOXWICH ROAD SOUTH, WILLENHALL

- Three bedoomed end terrace
- Deceptively spacious
- Two reception rooms
- Spacious kitchen
- Utility room
- Extensive double glazing and central heating

Offers in the region of £92,500



PINSON ROAD, WILLENHALL

- Three bedrooms
- Recently refurbished
- Gas fired central heating
- Double glazing
- Downstairs cloakroom
- Off road parking

OFFERS £85,000



STANLEY ROAD, DARLASTON

- Gas Fired Central Heating and Double Glazing
- Kitchen
- Lounge
- Extended Dining Room
- Two Bedrooms
- Foregarden with Parking and rear garden

OFFERS £79,950



COTSWOLD GROVE, COPPICE FARM, WILLENHALL

- Contact us for more details about shared ownership
- Over 55's ground floor apartment
- One bedroom
- Electric storage heaters and Double glazing
- Attractive communal gardens
- Communal parking

OFFERS £54,950 for a 70% share

## PROPERTIES TO LET



Luxury 2 bed apt  
Fully furnished  
En-suite bathroom  
Viewing recommended

Mellish Park, Walsall  
£700 ppcm

2 bed room g/f flat  
Fitted kitchen  
Parking, DG/Glazing  
Gas Central Heating

Loriners Grove, Walsall  
£695 ppcm

1 bed first floor flat  
Lounge  
Fitted kitchen  
Gas central heating

Gomer Street, Willenhall  
£295 ppcm

2 bed ground floor flat  
Lounge, Fitted kitchen  
Double glazing, DG/H  
Garage

Haworth Place, Shrewsbury  
£595 ppcm

Detached bungalow  
2 Double bed rooms  
Lounge, Kitchen, cons  
DG/H, Double glazing

Wateris Drive, Brownhills West  
£550 ppcm

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Call Today  
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Fernleigh Road, Walsall  
£475 ppcm

Over 55's development  
2 bed first floor flat  
Fitted Kitchen  
Ec/H heating, Parking

High View, Highgate Road, Walsall  
£425 ppcm

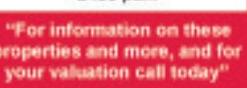
3 Bed detached  
Lounge, Kitchen  
Double glazing, DG/H  
Gardens

The Grove, Great Barr  
£550 ppcm

2 Bed first floor flat  
Fitted kitchen  
Double glazing  
DG/H, Parking

Victoria Avenue, Bloxwich  
£450 ppcm

3 Bed end terrace  
Lounge / Dining room  
Kitchen, DG, DG  
Gardens

Whitmore Street, Walsall  
£450 ppcm

"For information on these properties and more, and for your valuation call today!"  
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# DIXONS

Estate Agents

Willenhall Office  
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DoingMore...

**Hawthorn Place, Walsall**



Offers Over £100,000 **REDUCED**

A well presented two bedroom semi-detached home situated on a popular road in Bentley. Would be great for first time buyers!!! Vendors motivated to sell.

**Gurnard Close, Willenhall**



**£132,500** **NEW**

A two bedroom semi-detached home benefitting from a tandem garage, stunning conservatory and having been improved by the current owner.

**Instow Close, Willenhall**



**£125,000** **NEW**

A two bedroom semi-detached home situated on Coppice Farm. Well presented home ideal for first time buyer. Comprises lounge, kitchen and bathroom.

**Edinburgh Drive, Summer Hayes**



**£150,000**

A dormer bungalow comprising lounge, extended kitchen and bathroom, conservatory, three double bedrooms, front and rear gardens, driveway and no chain

**Kewstoke Road, Sneyd Park**



**£140,000** **NEW**

A two bedroom semi-detached home situated on a generous corner plot on the ever popular Sneyd Park development. Moments from Essington and access to local shops

**Bramble Close, Willenhall**



**£130,000** **NEW**

A three bedroom semi-detached home situated on a peaceful cul-de-sac in New Invention, comprising lounge, kitchen, conservatory, bathroom and rear garden.

**Queen Street, Moxley**



**£75,000** **NEW**

A three bedroom terraced home situated in a popular part of Moxley. Viewing is recommended. Comprising lounge, kitchen, bathroom and rear garden.

**Fairlawn Way, Willenhall**



**£97,995** **NEW**

A three bedroom terraced home presented in immaculate order. This would make a great family home due to the amount of living space on offer.

**Squires Grove, Willenhall**



**£100,000**

A modern two bedroom second floor apartment briefly comprising, communal entrance, lounge, fitted kitchen, bathroom, double glazing. Viewing highly recommended.

**King Edward Street, Wednesbury**



**£80,000**

A character two bedroom semi-detached home situated moments from Darlaston Town Centre. Would be a great first time buy, two reception rooms and rear garage with inspection

**St. Annes Road, Willenhall**



**£90,000**

A three bedroom end terrace with driveway parking and spacious rooms. Having been extensively improved by its current owner this property would be ideal for a first time

**Pinfold St. Extension, Wednesbury**



**£90,000** **REDUCED**

A well presented traditional two bedroom semi-detached home situated in a peaceful cul-de-sac. Offering spacious rooms and many period features

**The Barnard, The Keep, Stafford Road**



**£94,950** **NEW**

A brand new development offering two/three bedrooms houses and a coach house situated off the popular Stafford Road, Darlaston

**Torridon Road, Willenhall**



**Offers in excess of £155,000**

A detached bungalow set in Willenhall with accommodation comprising in brief of lounge, kitchen, conservatory, two bedrooms, bathroom, rear garden and workshop, the property also benefits from having central heating and double glazing

**Ampleforth Drive, Willenhall**



**£170,000**

Offering no-chain this well presented three bedroom detached property is an ideal family home. A very popular development with excellent access to Jct. 10 M6.

**Princethorpe Road, Willenhall**



**Offers Over £160,000**

A spacious double fronted four bedroom end terraced townhouse, presented in excellent order and situated close to the M6 and Black Country Route.

**Broad Lane, Essington**



**£260,000**

A two bedroom detached bungalow with accommodation comprising in brief of lounge, kitchen, loft space with dormer windows to front and rear. Garage with outhouses and ample frontage, also benefiting from central heating and double glazing.

**Goldicroft Road, Wednesbury**



**Offers In Region of £170,000**

A stunning three bedroom detached residence. A viewing is essential to appreciate the amount of space this property has to offer.

**Mill Lane, Willenhall**



**£220,000**

A well presented and spacious four bedroom detached residence. Beautiful gardens. Vendor motivated to sell. Viewing recommended

**Oxted Close, Wednesfield**



**£245,000**

Three bedroom detached bungalow situated in cul-de-sac in Wednesfield, comprising lounge, kitchen/breakfast room, dining room, ensuite, bathroom and detached

**Princethorpe Road, Willenhall**



**£235,000**

Four bedroom executive detached home situated on the popular Scholars Heath development. Offering spacious living and luxurious surroundings and being one of only four in a cul-de-sac

**Cannock Road, Willenhall**



**£200,000**

Three bedroom detached, two reception rooms, fully fitted kitchen, bespoke designed conservatory, bathroom, large frontage and rear garden. Traditional property with modern interior and open to serious offers. Viewing essential to fully appreciate the accommodation



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## Reduced price for three-bed home

Located in a popular area with easy access to both Wolverhampton and Walsall, this mid-terraced home is on the market as part of a leading local agent's series of January reductions.

The three-bedroomed home, in Victoria Street, Willenhall, has gas central heating, an extensive rear garden and plenty of potential.

Estate agent Paul Dubberley is managing the sale of this freehold home, inviting offers based on a newly-reduced price of £59,995.

Briefly, the house comprises a lounge with fireplace, sitting room, kitchen, family bathroom, three bedrooms and a rear garden.

amenities

A wide range of amenities is available nearby, along with excellent transport links to surrounding areas.

Entering, the front-facing sitting room has dimensions of 11ft 9in x 11ft, with a bow window, radiator, laminate flooring, coved ceiling, dado rail, under-stairs cupboard and an entrance to the lounge.

Measuring 11ft 9in x 11ft 11in, this has a rear-facing window, a brick-built fireplace housing a gas fire, laminate flooring, radiator, coved ceiling and a doorway to the kitchen. This has dimensions of 10ft 11in x 6ft 10in, with a window and door to the side, a wall-mounted central heating boiler, a sink and drainer and a range of



This three-bedroomed home in Willenhall is on offer as part of the agent's range of reductions.

front, measures 11ft 10in x 11ft and has a radiator and dado rail.

Bedroom two faces the rear, has dimensions of 12ft x 9ft 1in, a radiator and a store cupboard with access to the loft. The third bedroom measures 11ft x 6ft 11in, faces the rear and has a radiator. At the rear of the house, there is a garden with a brick-built shed.

To arrange a viewing, visit [www.pauldubberley.co.uk](http://www.pauldubberley.co.uk) or call the agent's Willenhall office on 01902 633323.

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### LOT 1 14 Abbotts Street, Walsall

Viewing Saturday 22nd January at 10.00 am & Wednesday 26th January at 9.00 am

A traditionally styled brick and tile two bedroom semi detached dwelling house situated close to Bloxwich centre but in need of full modernisation and improvement comprising lounge, dining room, kitchen, bathroom, WC, two bedrooms, box room, part double glazing and off street parking.

GUIDE PRICE £45,000-£50,000

### LOT 2 58 Linden Road, Brownhills

Viewing Saturday 22nd January at 9.30 am & Wednesday 26th January at 9.00 am

Traditionally styled mid terraced residence in need of full modernisation and improvement situated between Walsall Wood and Brownhills. The accommodation comprises two reception rooms, good size kitchen, ground floor shower room, on the first floor two bedrooms, the second bedroom accessed via bedroom one, off road rear parking, fore and rear gardens.

GUIDE PRICE £45,000-£55,000

### LOT 3 14 Lancaster Place, Walsall

Viewing Saturday 22nd January at 10.30 am & Wednesday 26th January at 9.00 am

Ideal for a first time buyer or investor this traditional mid terrace property situated close to Bloxwich centre has gas fired central heating and part double glazing and comprises reception hall, lounge, dining room, kitchen, lobby, three bedrooms, bathroom.

GUIDE PRICE £70,000-£80,000

### LOT 4 96 Walstead Road, Walsall

Viewing Saturday 22nd January at 11.00 am & Wednesday 26th January at 9.00 am

Traditional styled gas centrally heated and double glazed semi detached residence offering tremendous scope for improvement. Two reception rooms, kitchen, bathroom, good size store room, gardens.

GUIDE PRICE £110,000-£120,000

Late Entries  
Further details to follow:-

### LOT 5 70 Lodge Road, Walsall

Traditional three bedroom semi in need of complete modernization.

Guide Price £150,000 plus.

Viewing: Saturday 22nd January and  
Wednesday 26th January at 11.30am

### LOT 6

48 Cartbridge Lane, Rushall  
Traditional three bedroom semi

Guide Price £120,000 plus

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Offers in The Region of £239,950



### The Coppice, Short Heath Willenhall

- Deceptively Spacious Detached Bungalow
- Quiet Cul-de-sac Location
- Lounge, Separate Dining Room, Extended Kitchen 2 Good Bedrooms
- Shower Room/WC, Conservatory
- Single Garage & Off Road Parking

Offers in The Region of £159,995



### Gorey Close Coppice Farm, Willenhall

- An attractively situated semi-detached house
- Gas centrally heated and uPVC double glazed accommodation
- Lounge, extended dining room, fitted kitchen
- Three bedrooms, family bathroom/WC
- Single car garage, driveway
- Easily maintained gardens
- Open aspect to the front
- Viewing Essential

Offers in The Region of £138,950



### Swan Drive, Brownhills

- An Executive Detached House
- Large Entrance Hall, 2 Spacious Reception Rooms
- Magnificent Fitted Kitchen with Breakfast Room
- Utility Room, Wet Room/WC, 4 Spacious Bedrooms,
- En-suite Shower Room/WC, Family Bathroom
- Garage, Driveway, Front & Rear Gardens

Offers in The Region of £269,950



### Argyll Court Willenhall

- An immaculately presented ground floor apartment
- Gas centrally heated and uPVC double glazed
- A good sized lounge/kitchen
- One double bedroom and spacious bathroom/WC
- Allocated secure parking to the rear
- Long Leasehold

Offers in The Region of £74,950



### Kingfisher Court Willenhall

- A compact ground floor apartment situated in a modern block
- Gas centrally heated and uPVC double glazed accommodation
- Double bedroom, bathroom/WC
- Large through lounge and open plan kitchenette
- Parking, space and communal gardens

Offers in The Region of £79,995



### Reedly Road Sneyd Park, Willenhall

- An extended and much improved modern semi detached house
- Occupying a quiet yet convenient location on this ever popular estate
- Gas centrally heated and uPVC double glazed accommodation
- Front lounge, rear dining kitchen (re-fitted), extended family room
- Three bedrooms, re-fitted bathroom/WC
- Garage, detached garage, enclosed rear garden
- NO UPWARD CHAIN
- Must View!!

£149,950



### Lane Avenue, Reedswood, Walsall

- Improved & conveniently located Semi Detached Home
- Gas Central Heating and uPVC double glazing
- Spacious Lounge
- Re-fitted kitchen
- Two bedrooms
- Detached garage
- Viewing Essential

Offers in The Region of £99,950



### Andrew drive Willenhall

- A much improved & re-fitted semi-detached bungalow
- Gas central heating & double glazing
- Spacious Lounge
- Re-fitted kitchen
- Two bedrooms
- Detached garage
- Viewing Essential

Offers in The Region of £124,950

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## Gardening



Conifers outlined by snow to show branches looking rather splendid.



Picturesque – snow transformed the garden into a winter wonderland



Snow covered table and chairs look inviting from the kitchen window



The weeping beech here has grown very tall in recent years

# Bleak, yet a beautiful start to another year

**O**n the first day of January, I always go around my garden counting the flowers that are out.

Usually I can find about 100 different varieties – not fully fledged, but at least recognisable.

However, this year for the first time ever, there was hardly a single one. The weather in December was so awful they had all been eliminated.

There was a fog to start with, which made the hoar frost stick to all the little branches and every twig was encircled with white. The garden looked wonderful, but I soon became rather fed up with the continual whiteness.

It grew colder and colder, with pipes freezing for the first time in 45 years. Fortunately, they thawed out again without actually bursting, so we were very lucky.

Some trees looked super, like the weeping beech,



**GARDENING  
WITH  
PAT EDWARDS**

which has grown to quite a height – I had not realised how fine it is until now.

Many of the conifers were outlined to show their branches looking rather splendid. The view from the kitchen window of the table and chairs looked quite inviting.

I thought a lot about the small and seemingly vulnerable birds, so kept putting out lumps of fat and biscuit crumbs while keeping the bird feeders full of nuts and seeds.

Spotted woodpeckers came every day, and many different types of tit were always there, while the dunnet

was underneath picking up the fallen bits all the time. A great big blackbird was so greedy that I scared him off several times, but he always came back.

The only bird who beat him off was the robin, who became so tame, he would come to the window to remind us.

My first job each morning was to boil the kettle and melt the ice on the bird bath, so that our feathered friends had a good supply of water. All their usual supplies were frozen so hard that they would dehydrate very quickly otherwise.

The berries were good this year, but they were quickly eaten up. Holly berries were marvellous, and cotoneasters were a great standby.

Many people said that a hard winter was on the way, but I really cannot see how the plants can know that it is going to be extra cold. The awful thing is that we are only at the beginning of January, and there could be another two months of the same sort of weather still to come. I certainly hope not.

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VAUXHALL ASTRA 1.3 CDTi ECOFLEX

ROAD TEST

# Astra ups its game and takes top spot

December saw Vauxhall's Astra return to the top spot as the UK's best selling car for the month.

In its decades-old battle with the Ford Focus and previously the Ford Escort, the Astra has often come out on top.

The battle has been played out across a number of scenarios from the Astra GTE versus Escort RS Turbo conflict of the late 1980s to the soft tops of the mid nineties, but in these more austere times the contest is not to be the fastest or most glamorous, but to be the most frugal.

As might be expected where these two vehicles are concerned, the efficiency specialist line-ups are similar, with both Vauxhall and Ford offering stop-start and non-stop-start equipped versions of their economical family hatchbacks.

The non-stop-start versions have a cheaper initial purchase price but lose out, albeit marginally, in terms of fuel economy and emissions.

With the Astra, this is less of an issue than with the Focus because, whereas the addition of stop-start drops the 1.6-litre diesel Focus Economic from 104g/km to 99g/km CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and thus from tax band B to free of charge A, the Vauxhall drops from 109g/km to 104g/km, remaining in tax band B.

The Astra loses that battle, then, but not necessarily the war, as it works hard to make up for the initial shortcomings elsewhere. The biggest thorn in Ford's side comes in the form of the Astra's interior.

The Focus' upmarket, high quality interior



Ride quality is very good in the Astra



The Astra's cabin is of higher quality



The Astra Ecoflex is the green version of the long-lived model, with good economy

has been a large part of its 'class-leading' appeal, but the current generation of Astra has upped its game in this regard.

There's a high quality ambience in the cabin, giving the Astra a mini-Insignia feel. Material quality is very good and plastics are soft to the touch but sturdy. In the Exclusive model, soft lighting beneath the gear lever surround and in the door handle moulds is a premium touch and the chunky, sturdy feel to the steering wheel is replicated around the interior, in the metal rimmed knobs and the solid column stalks.

The Astra holds its own against its closest rival from the outside, too. Like the Focus

the Astra boasts a contemporary design that's attractive but refined and sensible.

The Ecoflex model needn't suffer visually for its greener emphasis, either. 17-inch alloy wheels are optional, to replace the flush-covered steels as standard. The revised aero package does little to harm the Astra's attractive exterior lines and the automatic aero-flap behind the grille is discreetly hidden. A particularly keen eye may even spot the marginally lowered suspension, which reduces drag alongside the low-rolling resistance tyres.

However, the major changes, although still hidden from view, are more noticeable.

The taller gearing, for example, which comes courtesy of a longer final drive ratio, affecting all five-forward gears. The positive side is that high speed and long distance cruises are more refined thanks to lower rpm. This works well with the Astra's impressive ride quality, even on the revised suspension.

It does result in less inspiring straight line performance than some eco rivals, however. Using a smaller capacity diesel engine seems like an obvious way to reduce fuel consumption and works very well around town, but when greater acceleration is required the 1.3-litre unit does need to be pushed harder and kept above 2,500rpm for any real per-

formance. This means the engine remains audible in the cabin, too, particularly when cold.

A lower idling speed counters this slightly in the standard Ecoflex model, but not as much as the zero-idling philosophy of the stop-start equipped model.

On the move, the Astra can hold its head high. Ride quality is very good – of benefit to driver and passengers – and the chassis is responsive but predictable and secure. ESP is part of a respectable list of standard equipment (although electric rear windows are omitted for weight saving), an important factor for a family car.

Similarly, an accommodating interior boosts the family appeal. Boot space behind the hatch is conveniently proportioned with a bigger opening than initially appears from the outside. The rear bench will accept two adults with little fuss, too, with good access offered by the five-door layout.

The on-paper figures suggest that the Astra hasn't quite trumped the Focus in the battle to be greenest, but the stylish and noticeably well-built model is impressive enough to keep the contest alive for the foreseeable future.

#### FACTS AT A GLANCE

Model: Vauxhall Astra 1.3 CDTi Ecoflex Exclusiv, £18,005 on the road. Engine: 1.3-litre turbocharged petrol unit developing 95bhp and 140lb/ft of torque. Transmission: Five-speed manual transmission, driving the front wheels. Performance: Maximum speed 109mph, 0-62mph 13.8 seconds. CO<sub>2</sub> emissions: 133g/km. Economy: 68.9mpg.

Test by RICHARD H HAMMAND

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The suspension is lowered by another 10mm



The BMW M3's purposeful-looking interior



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Suspension can be fine-tuned electronically

**D**E S P I T E BMW's latest M3 boasting a muscular V8 engine and a considerable 420 horsepower, some fans of the high performance coupe wanted more; more control, more driver involvement.

More of a precision instrument than the similar size but distinctly hooligan-esque C63 AMG from Mercedes, the M3 will be the first one for Peugeot UK's Guy Wilks and Phil Pugh in a Peugeot 207 S2000.

### The rally

is steeped

in history

and can

even be

said to have

created the sport

of rallying.

In the first one

in 1911

competitors

set

off

from

all four

corners

of Europe

and then

"rallied"

together

to finish up

in Monte Carlo to celebrate the end of a unique event.

The current event

no longer sees

competitors

start

from

the four

corners

but it

is, however,

no less

of a challenge.

In 1911 the first

rally

was won

by

Henri

Rouget

of the

wheel

of a 25 hp

Tucat-Mery.

Now

competitors

will take up the challenge

in state-of-the-art

cars

and the

evolutionary

process

has been

a steady one.

The application

of more power

, more

performance

and more useful

technology

has seen the

M3

transformed

from race

track

special

coupe

wanted

more;

more control,

more driver

involvement.

The current M3 has always been an accessible car in terms of its performance, and the addition of the Competition Package only serves to enhance its appeal.

After a few miles of press on motoring you could even say that the handful of changes do much to unlock the car's underlying potential.

### Sharpens

With the ability to fine tune the suspension and stability control settings, seriously keen drivers can now delve that bit deeper into the M3's reserves. On the road the car's lower stance might appear modest but this feature and the switch to standard fit 19-inch wheels noticeably sharpens up responses. That favourite B road of yours just got a whole lot more interesting.

The same is true when engaging in higher speed activities on, say a track. It's at times like this that you fully understand the car's true potential; the returned electronics work tirelessly in the background to help and enhance the experience, leaving the M3's vocal V8 motor to take centre stage.

Those same critics will no doubt be quick to complain about the perceived increased focus on electronic aids in what is supposed to be a driver's car, but once behind the wheel you'll soon discover that you're still very much in control.

From the car's slick manual gearbox to its weighty, accurate steering and progressive brakes, BMW's M3 offers appreciative and enthusiastic drivers an experience that's second to none in the high performance coupe market. Factor in the Competition Package enhancements and the search for the car's edge is over. It's here and it's all good.

### FACTS AT A GLANCE

**Model:** BMW M3 Coupe Competition Package, from £57,930 on the road in Competition Package.

**Engine:** 4.0-litre V8 petrol unit developing 414bhp.

**Transmission:** Six-speed manual transmission, driving the rear wheels.

**Performance:** Maximum speed 155mph, 0-62mph 4.8 seconds.

**Economy:** 22.8mpg

**CO<sub>2</sub> Rating:** 290/g/km.

**Suspension can be fine-tuned electronically**



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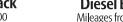
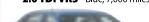
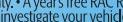
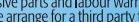
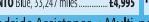
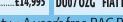
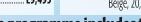
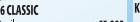
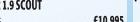
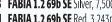
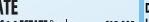
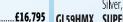
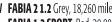
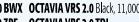
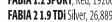
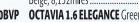
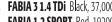
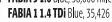
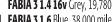
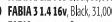
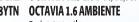
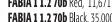
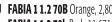
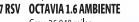
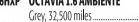
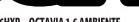
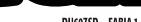
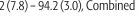
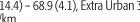
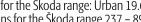
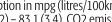
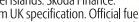
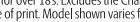
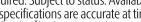
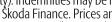
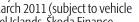
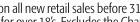
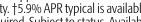
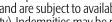
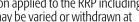
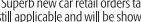
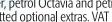
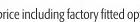
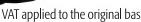
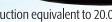


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## thechronicle

## RUGBY

**A better effort by Aldridge**

League high fliers Civil Service had knocked the stuffing out of Aldridge in the previous encounter to inflict their heaviest defeat of the season.

The home side gave a much more powerful performance this time round and if they hadn't been subjected to some controversial adjudicating, the rewards – for the team effort that was put in – would have been greater.

Aldridge forwards showed from the off that they had the measure of the opposition pack and with the slope and wind behind them, kicking to set up attacking positions seemed the shrewd option but they failed to fully exploit the advantage.

As it was they maintained control in the first period and a

**MIDLANDS 5 WEST (NORTH)**  
**ALDRIDGE 6 B-HAM CIVIL SERVICE 17**

well-struck penalty from scrum-half Chris Jones opened the scoring.

The visitors looked dangerous with the ball in hand but the home side's defence was solid.

It was from an innocuous looking ruck 30 metres out that Service took the lead when winger Mark Manton picked up and scampered up the blind side to run round and score between the posts. No 10 Liam Clarke added the conversion.

Civil Service had their best spell early in the second half. From a forward encounter on the left, swift handling transferred the ball to the opposite wing where Clarke utilising some

fancy footwork got the touch down in the corner. He added the conversion and shortly afterwards a penalty to complete the visitors' scoring.

Aldridge then had their best spell where the forwards took control and, driving the heart out of the opposition pack, hammered away against their goal line for most of the last quarter of the match but although managing to get the ball over the line a number of occasions couldn't quite get it down.

It was not going to be their day. Chris Jones broke clear and was on his way to the line when he was whistled back for a service infringement but he did score a second penalty late on which seemed scant reward for what the home side had contributed.

With no club sponsor to usher in the New Year, Bloxwich took matters into their own hands and approached a local charity, Walsall Hospice, to offer prime spot on their team kit.

The charity shirt proved a big winner as the first team remained undefeated at King George's (KGV).

After a last-kick-of-the-game penalty, for a 10-7 win at Market Drayton last week, Bloxwich were keen not to repeat such a lack



Bloxwich Rugby Club with Rachel Ridder, centre left, and Cheryl Bradburne, centre right flanking team captain Richard Jones

**BLOXWICH 53 WARLEY 0**

lustre outing. A powerful home pack set about their task from the outset.

The controlled play around the ruck created options on either side of the pitch where a swift ball out to wing Sean Bottomer exploited the space to commit the last defender and put full back Martin Maclean over. Daniel Hough added the second try. Handling errors slowed the scoring down until 25 minutes, when Danny Palmer took an angled run for his first try.

On the stroke of half time left wing Luke Hough secured the try bonus point. Warley appeared influenced by the charity shirts as they donated a further five tries, but in truth a disciplined forward display and controlled possession freed the back line to concentrate on attacking space. An eccentric performance by No 8 Adam Bowater was punctuated with two tries and three conversions. Danny Palmer and Luke Hough went over in space, the latter for their second tries. On the final play of the game fly-half Craig Sofely crossed for his first try for the club. Sean Bottomer added the conversion at the final whistle.

Three other charities share space with Walsall Hospice on the team shirts: Midlands Air Ambulance; Help for Heroes and Woodspoon. Keep updated at [www.bloxwicheRFC.com](http://www.bloxwicheRFC.com).

**Walsall keep a tight rein on game for win****LEAMINGTON 18 WALSALL 24**

Winless Leamington put up a terrific performance for well over an hour of this match and, if anything they deserved more than a solitary losing score at the end of this game.

During the first half in particular, they displayed a free flowing adventurous style of rugby that belied their lowly league position and they fully deserved their 15-3 lead at half time.

The visitors started strongly, but their only reward for a period of sustained pressure was a Matt Wood penalty.

But even at this early stage, it was evident that the Warwickshire team were prepared to play an expansive game and were prepared to run the ball at every opportunity.

They were soon rewarded for their positive attitude when some good support play saw them break through the Walsall defence before producing some fine inter passing over forty metres before flanker Matt Cooper dived over near the posts.

Simon Tyler's conversion made it 7-3. Just five minutes later and the hosts scored a similar try from a similar distance. This time it was a sustained attack along their right touchline that saw full back Adam Preece breaking through Walsall tackles to score wide out.

**Defending**

During the rest of the first half, the hosts were keen to push home their advantage, and only some desperate Walsall defending kept them at bay. Referee Nicola Reynolds, who kept firm control throughout the afternoon, awarded penalty to Leamington at a ruck.

Scrum half Patrick Northover did well to overcome the muddy conditions, putting over a fine thirty-five metre penalty to make it 15-3 at the interval. Walsall began to take more control of the game during the second half and showed a willingness to move the ball at every opportunity. They reduced the deficit in the fifty fifth minute when Wootton and Mould broke out of defence and linked up with flanker Rob Tierney.

He made good ground before feeding winger Jono Edwards, he finished off well from 20 metres. Wood's conversion narrowed the gap to five points. However, the hosts continued to try and maintain their "free flowing" style and another long range penalty from the impressive Northwood gave them an 18-10 lead.

It was the visitors who finished the strongest and they put themselves back in the game with an excellent



Javan Jarrett on his way to score one of his tries.



Joe Brown on the run.

letry in the 72nd minute. Winger Paul Naylor made a good run down the right before finding Steve Halbert in support. The Walsall captain carried the ball into the opposition 22 before linking up again with his support players.

Two passes later and the ball reached Harvey Wootton, the powerful centre finished off well to score his first league try for his new club. Wood added, the not too easy conversion, to make it 18-17 with just over five minutes left.

The visitors completed their comeback with what proved to be the winning try with just three minutes left. Tom Emes had made good ground from his own 22, prop forward Pete Fitzgerald's charge took the ball into opposition territory and then some quick passing saw lock Nick Field break through. He found full back Chris Mould in support, he showed good running skills before scoring. Outside half Matt Wood's conversion completed a rather remarkable comeback by the Walsall outfit.

This win eases the Delves Road team away from

the relegation zone in Midlands One West. But they have another vital match this Saturday, when Nuneaton Old Edwardians come to the Broadway.

**Walsall 2nds 6 Bourneville 2nds 30**

Walsall competed well for the majority of the game but continued pressure from the hosts in the last quarter resulted in them scoring three converted tries. Andy Hawkins scored all of Walsall's points.

**Walsall 3rds 45 Eccleshall 2nds 15**

A comfortable win for the 3rd XV. Tries from Jeff Williamson(2), Kevin Foster (2) Simon LeFevre, Simon Bickley, and Mike Perkins. Mick Broadhurst kicked five conversions.

**Walsall 27 Old Coventrians 14 U17s**

Walsall played the first half against a strong wind. But they produced some stylish play, and were soon three tries in front. Jason Jarrett scored two, with Seb Green also crossing. Ben Tipson converting one of these. Old Covs replied with a try and conversion of their own just before half time, which was suitably matched by another Walsall try by Joe Brown.

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**SPORT****How they fared against Town**

**Man of the Match – Darryl Westlake:** Defended beyond his years. Was the only one of the back four not to make basic errors. 7

**David Bevan:** A home debut to forget as his poor kick handed Rhodes a fourth late on. Hesitated to allow Kilbane extra time to score and was all at sea when McCombe added a second. 4

**Andy Butler:** Held his hands up after his error gifted Kilbane the chance to equalise and could have been at fault for the visitors' second. Booked for a hard challenge on

Roberts. 5

**Manny Smith:** Was left in Kilbane's wake for the first goal and struggled to deal with Huddersfield's strikers. 5

**Aaron Lescott:** He has improved under Smith's guidance but still has rushes of blood and wasted possession on occasion. 6

**Alex Nicholls:** Scored his second goal in four games to put the Saddlers in charge but needs to get on the scoresheet more often. 6

**Matt Richards:** The dead ball specialist did it again for his seventh of a

personally productive season. 7.

**Paul Marshall:** His set-piece deliveries were poor and he wilted as the game progressed. 5/10

**Julian Gray:** Struggled to break into the game, but came to life during spells in the second. 6/10

**Jon Macken:** Another frustrating afternoon for the veteran who couldn't test the Huddersfield back-line. 5/10

**Will Crigg:** The ball wouldn't fall for him and he often just missed out. Bagged a decent assist for Nicholls and the rookie should be pleased. 6

**David Bevan:** He had little chance with the goals and saved well from Hoskins in the first half. His distribution was much improved. 6

**Darryl Westlake:** Cleared Hughes' effort off the line as Rovers threatened to take charge but he was caught too square for Kuffour's goal. 7

**Manny Smith:** Remained calm in the face of mounting second-half pressure but was booked after a cynical bodycheck on Kuffour late on. 6

**Andy Butler:** He was often in the right place at the right time to clean

up at the back. 7. **Aaron Lescott:** Returned to haunt Rovers after his best display for the Saddlers. Scored his first Walsall goal and was a threat going forward. 8

**Alex Nicholls:** Found himself in good positions but wasted the chances too often, to the frustrations of the travelling fans. 6

**Matt Richards:** Enjoyed a comfortable first half where he broke forward well and, like Marshall, had to put his body on the line to save a point. 7 **Paul Marshall:** Spread the play well in a fine first half before

showing his battling qualities with the Saddlers on the rack after the break. 7

**Julian Gray:** Recalled and worked hard for the team without really threatening going forward, although he was always useful. 7

**Man of the match – Will Grigg:** Grabbed his first senior goal and was a constant threat to Rovers. He held the ball up well. 8

**Jon Macken:** Should have scored in the first half when he shot wide and faded in the second half but set up Lescott's late equaliser. 6

**LEISURE LEAGUES**  
**Monks stay at top of league**

Sean Jackson ensured Monks & Crane remain at the summit of the Wolverhampton 6 a side Monday league as they eased out Sparky's R Us FC by five goals to one.

England Lions kept up the pressure with a batting 5-3 win over Hardly Athletic, whilst in the Tuesday 6 a side league James Dickinson slammed in four goals for leaders The Legends in a 6-0 triumph over The New Inn.

Elsewhere, Coneygreen FC were in devastating form as they smashed 14 past Only Here For The Beer who were unable to muster a reply.

Pensett completed a fine Brierley Hill championship winning season in style as the eased past Green Machine by five goals to one. Pensett Rejects were in free-scoring form in Division One, smashing an incredible 14 past Pink Gunners who could only respond with one.

Coppice sprung a shock in the Walsall 6 a side Monday Premier Division as they battled past leaders Jollysaddler by four goals to three, Richard Moore proving the difference. FC Oldhouse staked their promotion claims in Division One as Rob Preece was the stand out performer in an 8-2 rout of Bloxwich Uninvited, whilst Wednesday Boys tore apart Trotters FC in the final tier, 9-0 the final outcome. Singh's Six demonstrated just why they lead the way in the Thursday 6 a side Premier Division with a 5-1 hammering of Youth Harted. The final tier saw something of a goal flourish, as both Bath Street and Isurmotherwell were winners.

**BLOXWICH UTD****Crucial cup game**

Bloxwich United will be hoping their excellent form in the FA Vase continues this Saturday when they will play host to Torpoint Athletic in the last 16 of the competition.

The visitors, who play in the South West Peninsula League in Cornwall, will be making the long journey North on the morning of the game and the Red Lions are hoping a decent home crowd at the game will help them to victory and move them a step closer to the final at Wembley Stadium.

Chairman Rod Jones said "It's a massive game for everyone at the club and we are urging the people of Bloxwich to come down and show their support. We have a lot of local lads playing here and it would be a big help if we can get a good crowd in on the day and really get behind the team." The game kicks off at 3pm.

**HOCKEY****LADIES 1ST BLOXWICH 16 KEELE 0**

Bloxwich took charge from the first minute and didn't stop till the very end. Every goal has a story and some fantastic play to go with it. Goal scorers – Charlotte Mincher 1, Julie Kempson 4, Amie Lawrence 3, Steph Dean 5, Nic Nullis 2 and Nessha Patel 1. A fantastic team performance.

**MEN'S 1ST BLOXWICH 0 PERSHORE 2**

A poor performance across the pitch cost Bloxwich this week, sloppy passing and poor team play have pretty much ended Bloxwich's chances of promotion. Pershore took the lead halfway through the second half from a short corner then killed the game off in the last few minutes as Bloxwich just couldn't get the ball to there forwards.

**Saddlers manage to get a point at The Memorial****BRISTOL ROVERS 2 WALSALL 2**

It was the point nobody wanted. In the context of a normal season a 2-2 draw at Bristol Rovers would go down as a job well done.

But after two points from crucial games at Tranmere and Rovers it just doesn't seem enough.

The draw lifted the Saddlers off the bottom of League One and moved them to within seven points of safety but there was a hollow ring to it. Deep down they know it should have been three – not only after their dominant first half – but because they needed the win.

Third-bottom Rovers needed it themselves but their plight isn't Walsall's concern.

Tuesday night marked the halfway stage in the season and the Saddlers have 19 points from 23 games – a stat which, if replicated in the second half of the campaign, will see them down.

The outing at the Memorial Stadium completed the games against the rest of the bottom 10 and the Saddlers record leaves a lot to be desired – 10 points out of a possible 27. Walsall have lost too many cheap points in this season and almost threw more away last night. They imploded during a horror 60 seconds after the break which almost cost them dear.

**Limitations**

Caretaker boss Dean Smith has harnessed the spirit but, after only a week in the job, will know all too well the players' limitations.

Smith made two changes from the 3-3 draw at Tranmere with Julian Gray in for rookie Jamie Paterson and Grigg replacing Steve Jones.

Grigg didn't have to wait long for his goal, arriving unmarked at the near post to turn in Alex Nicholls' fourth-minute centre. The Saddlers had capitalised on Rovers' uncertain start and there was a lingering tension in the air – despite the Pirates introducing new boss Dave Penney before the game.

Rovers were struggling and their long ball tactics played into the hands of the robust Andy Butler and Manny Smith. Rovers hardly threatened – until David Bevan saved at the feet of Will Hoskins.

There was a buzz about the Saddlers. It helped, of course, that Rovers were nothing short of woeful. Time and again they squandered possession.

The poor Pirates were being shown up by their visitors and Grigg saw a header deflected wide before forcing Luke Daniels to palm away a dipping volley as half-time approached.

But if the Saddlers thought they were going to be in for an easy ride after the break they were stunned when Rovers netted twice in a minute.

The first, at 53 minutes, was too simple as Hoskins and Kuffour played a neat one-two and when the latter crossed Hoskins tapped in his 14th goal of the season.

The second was slightly more stylish as Kuffour – who had only been on the pitch eight minutes – calmly picked his spot from 18 yards. With seven minutes left, Lescott bagged his first for Walsall – against the club he left last summer.

A driving run from the left-back saw him exchange passes with Macken before lashing past Daniels.



Bristol Rovers' Will Hoskins is heading for a fall after challenging Walsall's Andy Butler.



Saddlers players have something to celebrate.

**WALSALL WOOD**  
**Single goal is ruin for streak****WALSALL-WOOD 0 CADBURY A 1**

Wood's unbeaten run came to an end with Athletic preventing the home side achieving a league double.

The visitors started the game strongly and a scrambled clearance resulted in centre-half Chris Lewis putting the ball into his own net after only nine minutes.

Home boss Nigel Birch changed formation and Wood created several chances as Nadal hit the crossbar and Purvey headed wide.

Athletic had a chance to double their lead two minutes before half-time from the penalty spot but put the spot-kick wide.

Home keeper Braddock made two excellent saves in the second half and Wood pressed for an equaliser late on but were unable to find the net.

"Everyone can see that the lads cannot be criticised for effort but the simple fact is we do not score enough goals," said Birch.

**WILLENHALL TOWN**  
**Reds taste defeat at Bridgnorth's hands****BRIDGNORTH 2 WILLENHALL 1**

Willenhall slumped to a Midland Alliance defeat at the hands of Bridgnorth. They had the bonus of a third minute lead when Jason Hurdley lost possession to Dean Williams and he fed leading scorer Mitch Fellows who calmly slotted his 13th league goal of the season into the corner.

With the wind behind them and playing down the slope, the visitors would have hoped for a better return than being 2-1 down at the interval.

On 29 minutes Andy Rich evaded the offside trap and was left with a simple finish into the corner past an exposed Jamie Flynn before a dubious free-kick right on the break proved profitable when it was taken quickly to Luke Chapman and he fizzed a cracking effort home from 30 yards.

After the break a poor back pass put from Jamie Fisher past Flynn under unnecessary pressure and the keeper scuffed his clearance to Rich, leaving an open goal for the striker. Flynn made one flying save before the hosts grabbed a fourth goal in stoppage time when Chapman picked up a loose ball and crossed towards Anwar Olugbon touched home.

**BLOXWICH UT**  
**Blox come out all even****WTON CASUALS 2 BLOXWICH 2**

The home side got off to a good start Mike Hancock heading in a Mark Habbersham free-kick in the seventh minute.

Bloxwich's Leon Taylor equalised in the 27th minute when he brushed off a challenge before putting the ball beyond the reach of Marc Evans.

Taylor claimed his second goal just before half time when he side-footed in a Karl Edwards cross from the right. Bloxwich went close to getting a third goal when substitute Alan Wilkes slipped the ball past Evans but Luke Tudor was on hand to clear the danger.

Casuals enjoyed an excellent spell and deserved the equaliser that arrived in the 74th minute when Jonathan Aldridge got the finishing touch to a Tom Maydew cross.

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# sport

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## TIME FOR COURAGE IN SURVIVAL FIGHT

### WALSALL 2 HUDDERSFIELD 2

FORTUNE favours the brave. Now, Walsall have to muster all their courage for the fight.

At the heart of this Saddlers' side is a new-found spirit but whoever takes charge at Exeter on Saturday must have the bottle to shoulder one hell of a challenge.

The weekend's defeat to Huddersfield, however undeserved, merely highlighted Walsall's desperate plight. Managerless, and pointless for another game, they sit seven points from safety at the bottom of League One, an appointment is now pressing as Walsall bid to leave the limbo they occupy.

The Saddlers have bided their time and refused to be rushed but they must make their move soon. It has been 13 days since they finally sacked Chris Hutchings and while the Saddlers dallied on that decision, they cannot afford to be so lax this time.

There is a difference between taking your time and wasting it. Caretaker boss Dean Smith is still a frontrunner because he is the present incumbent but, after Saturday, his position seems less certain.

The head of youth has admitted he "wasn't sure" about going for the job.

Mark Kinsella watched on – although as a frequent visitor one must not jump to conclusions – and would relish the challenge. Paul Trollope is another hotly-linked possibility, but as a man on gardening leave after departing Bristol Rovers last month he has to tread more carefully than others.

Fans can expect to see an announcement before the trip to Exeter. Whoever it may be, they will take charge of a team who have plenty of heart but little luck. Smith remained defiantly positive and he has instilled extra fight into the team – fight that had long since gone under the previous management.

Under him, there is a 'have-a-go-hero' nature, which had been lost, and they deserved more than defeat on Saturday. It has endeared the Saddlers to their supporters and allowed some to reconnect but it has only gained them two points from three games.

And while they continue to undermine themselves it will be a fruitless fight, with no happy ending. Basic errors blight their performances as they toss goals and points away.

### Highlighted

Andy Butler's slip for Kevin Kilbane's equaliser and David Bevan's missick for Jordan Rhodes' injury time fourth highlighted Walsall's fragility. Between the strikes the Saddlers failed to add with corners from which centre backs Jamie McCombe and Peter Clarke scored.

Poor defending will cost you but naïve defending will kill you off. Under Smith Walsall will score goals – you just don't bank on them to keep a clean sheet.

It's not a new problem – they've been shipping goals all season – but in the past three games they have conceded nine. That is a goal every half an hour and no team can do that and survive.

They have kept just three clean sheets this season and their goal difference stands at a wretched minus 22. And the talk of having 22 games to turn the season around seems hollow when you work out they need to win at least 10 and draw one to reach the magic 50 point mark for survival.

Walsall must now hit something regarding play-off form to reach it. Considering they have only won five all season it's a tall order. It's not impossible, but with the way things are going you wouldn't bet on it.

In the last three games they have squandered the lead and failed to win any – despite valiant efforts.

This time Alex Nicholls' early opener was cancelled out by Kilbane's fine finish after Butler's poor pass. It was typical Walsall, start well but blow it, and McCombe's header merely confirmed the fears.

Matt Richards' seventh of the season levelled things and cued a home onslaught, but they couldn't capitalise on. They fell to two late sucker punches – Clarke's overhead kick and Rhodes' late fourth after Bevan's missick. If the watching managers wanted any evidence of the task ahead, they got it and now Walsall must fight for their lives.



Will Griggs gets away from his marker



Another chance goes begging as Alex Nicholls cannot get to the ball



Manny Smith, during one of the many clashes with the Huddersfield attack



Alex Nicholls celebrates his goal

**Smith stays happy but unsure over being boss**

Caretaker boss Dean Smith today revealed he remains undecided whether or not to chase the Walsall hot-seat.

The head of youth confirmed he has not applied to succeed Chris Hutchings yet after Saturday's 4-2 defeat to Huddersfield.

Smith has drawn two and lost one of his three games in charge and had previously remained tight-lipped over his future.

"I'm not sure, to be honest," he said, when asked on his aspirations to be manager.

"I will say I'm really enjoying it at the moment. I haven't got too high on the last two comebacks and I won't get too low on the defeat. I've really enjoyed being at the helm."

"My future is with Walsall. I'm the head of youth and I'll take it game by game. I'm the caretaker manager and my job, at the moment, is to get results."

But, despite his future being in limbo, Smith has been given the green light to bring in new players to aid the Saddlers' relegation fight.

"I speak to the chairman regularly and he knows we need to strengthen the squad. We want to stay in League One and it's going to be a battle," Smith added.

### Strengthening

"We are looking to bring a couple of players in. We know we need strengthening."

The Saddlers sank back to the bottom of League One on Saturday and sit seven points adrift of 20th-placed Tranmere, who have a game in hand.

Errors from Andy Butler and David Bevan gifted Huddersfield their first and fourth goals and Smith admitted the slips cost the Saddlers the game in the end.

"We didn't get the goal when we were on top and ultimately paid the price," he said.

"We need to score goals if we're going to stay up and you can't win games without scoring – what we've got to do is cut out the mistakes."

"That's the reason why we conceded four goals on Saturday."

"Andy held his hand up for the mistake and Bev held his hand up for the fourth. Instead of putting it back in their half he tried to pick out Darryl Westlake. What cost us was two mistakes and two set-pieces."

"It was an entertaining game but unfortunately we came out with nothing."

### League Table

	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Brighton	23	8	2	26	26	16	5	3	16	20	46	
Huddersfield	23	8	2	23	26	12	5	3	20	20	42	
Southampton	24	7	4	23	9	5	1	4	20	11	41	
Bournemouth	24	9	1	31	10	2	5	5	14	17	39	
Peterborough	23	8	1	32	25	3	2	6	14	21	36	
Nottingham	24	9	2	19	21	2	1	9	12	25	36	
Charlton	23	5	3	18	15	4	3	2	17	35		
Oldham	23	5	2	18	16	4	3	4	16	32		
Sheff Wed	23	6	3	18	19	4	1	6	18	15	34	
Colchester	22	5	6	21	20	3	4	2	11	11	34	
Rochdale	23	4	5	21	19	15	4	3	15	15	32	
Brentford	23	4	3	22	19	17	2	2	20	9	32	
Hartlepool	22	4	2	17	21	5	3	4	9	9	31	
Carlisle	22	6	4	32	22	13	2	3	4	11	31	
Exeter	24	5	4	22	16	3	7	3	13	29		
Notting County	22	7	0	4	17	11	2	3	6	13	30	
Plymouth	24	4	5	21	19	19	2	2	6	17	28	
Leyton Orient	23	22	5	22	15	10	2	5	6	17	28	
Swindon	24	5	3	16	18	12	4	5	20	23	28	
Tranmere	23	4	3	15	15	13	3	6	12	18	26	
Yeovil	23	4	2	14	16	13	3	7	10	20	26	
Bristol Rovers	23	3	4	14	14	12	5	6	11	23	23	
Day & Red	23	2	4	10	14	3	2	8	14	24	21	
<b>WALSALL</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>19</b>

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Pinfold Street, Darlaston/Wednesbury WS10 8SY

Not to be sold in conjunction with any other offer.

### GIFT VOUCHER

In Conjunction with Conservatory Order - One Item per customer  
 Electronics including Fan Light    Tiles  
 Air Cooler/Heater    Laminate Flooring

Please specify by ticking box  
(Must be handed to representative on first visit)

**FENSA** **PILKINGTON**

Midland Conservatory Company Ltd

Not to be sold in conjunction with any other offer.